

# Childhood Education

The Magazine  
for Teachers  
of Children

*To Stimulate Thinking  
Rather Than  
Advocate Fixed Practice*

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## Next Month—

"Working With Children As Scientists" is the theme for next month's issue. Section I will deal with the question, What do we mean when we speak of children as scientists? Section II will describe ways in which children work as scientists.

A philosopher-scientist — David Hawkins — discusses some recent developments in physical science that throw light upon the problems of childhood education. A science specialist—Herbert Zim —compares children's developmental characteristics with those of the scientific worker and describes some children's science experiences.

Five articles will be devoted to the kinds of science experiences children have at school—experiences in nature study, physical science and health. News and reviews will complete the issue.

**EXTRA COPIES** — Orders for reprints from this issue must be received by the Graphic Arts Press, 914 20th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., by the fifteenth of the month of issue.



Photograph by "The Chicago Sun," Courtesy Scott, Foresman and Company

**Children As Thinkers and Planners:** Thearon Atkins, a senior at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, High School and leader of the school's Youth Council on the Atomic Crisis, is shown speaking to a social studies class at the Laboratory School, University of Chicago.

# Working With Children As Thinkers And Planners

THERE IS NO BUSYNESS COMPARABLE WITH THE BUSYNESS OF THE two-year-old at work in his sandpile, with or without benefit of companions. He digs and scoops and carries and dumps with no apparent purpose other than that of doing something. We may hazard a guess at what he is thinking if we listen carefully to the running commentary that usually accompanies his digging.

Often we are startled by the marked insight shown by five-year-olds in their conversations with each other, or by the questions asked by threes and fours. That young children think, we can be sure. How much of what they say is verbalization without meaning, we can only guess, but it is safe to assume that most young children do more thinking than we give them credit for and know more than adults ever suspect.

Eight-year-olds show another kind of busyness. It is busyness with a purpose surrounded by an aura of social awareness. Each child is very much aware of his neighbors and of what they are doing and of what they think of him. Through their conversation, their horseplay, their cooperative efforts to "get through" the job at hand, they may or may not reveal what they are thinking. At this early age they have often acquired the cultural pattern of keeping their real thoughts to themselves.

Tom who is working alone emptying the wastebaskets may be thinking, "They always give me the dirty jobs. None of the kids like me."

Sally, Freddie and Melba Jean are having a gay time with the costume box. Wherever these three are, there is always fun. Their conversation and behavior seem to reveal a living in the moment, spontaneous and free. Whatever thinking is done simply stimulates the fun.

Ralph holds the dust pan for Lewis and thinks, "If I can help him, maybe he will let me use his catcher's mit after school."

Frank and his committee labor quietly and earnestly as they try to solve the mechanics of a complicated press. "If we insert this long bar here, that will give the proper leverage," thinks Frank aloud. "Let's try it."

FOUR OUT OF FIVE CHILDREN WORK WITH their thoughts on the next job to be done or on what they would rather be doing at the moment. Three out of eight may be at work because the teacher told them what to do and how to do it. They are the drones, the automata, of which every group seems to have



some. Do they think? And what about? Their behavior reveals nothing but conformity.

The nine months old baby stares at us when first we visit her. She seems to be sizing us up with her whole physical being—her black eyes look straight at us, her expression remains immobile, and her body sits, unyielding. Soon she may smile and vocalize, signifying her acceptance of us. What does she think? We can only guess and wish we knew.

As we look at the ills of a post-war world and try to set up machinery for curing them, we are more aware than ever of the importance of thinking and planning. That individuals and groups can think and plan and that better thinking and planning come from early and constant practice are discussed and illustrated by the contributors to this issue.

"Good habits of thinking," says Percival Symonds, "consist of approaching difficult situations by studying them, appreciating the issues involved, estimating possible outcomes and reaching a reasoned decision as a guide to action." Ruth Webb illustrates these good habits of thinking through anecdotal accounts of children's experiences and by comparison shows how thinking and planning develop as the child matures.

Claudia Lewis says in "How Well Do We Know Our Children?" that if we would know the children we teach we must give them opportunities to reveal themselves. There is perhaps no area in which public education errs more greatly than in failing to provide opportunities whereby children may reveal themselves as people—what they think and how they feel.

How a rural area plans for and with its children is illustrated by Lucile Ellison in the third article of her series on Breathitt County, Kentucky. What a group of six-year-olds said in informal conversation that reveals their thinking is recorded by Virginia Stout.

"The Child's Need to Anticipate," by Lili Peller, deals with an important factor in the development of young children as thinkers and planners. "Planning the child's day in such a way that he is able to anticipate what is going to happen and is permitted to take active part in the happenings is an essential initiation into democratic living," says Mrs. Peller.

AS WE LOOK AT OUR WAY OF LIVING TODAY and attempt to evaluate the essentials, we know that the ability to think and to plan and to act on best thinking and planning are vital to improved living for all human beings. To know what any person really thinks is the art of human relationships. To stimulate another to think is the essence of teaching. To encourage individuals to think for themselves is to establish a fundamental principle of democratic living.—F.M.



# How Do Good Habits of Thinking Begin?

What does it mean for a child to grow in his thinking? Of what elements do good habits of thinking consist? What can parents and teachers do to encourage good habits of thinking? Mr. Symonds, professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, answers these questions and emphasizes the fact that good habits of thinking begin even in infancy.

IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT GOOD habits of thinking begin when one is very young. It should also be obvious that it is impossible to point to a particular time and place where good habits of thinking commence. From all that we have learned, thinking is an exceedingly complex process which has a very slow and gradual growth and is the result of many experiences in meeting new situations thoughtfully. This article will attempt to answer three questions:

What is meant by good habits of thinking?

What are some of the constituents of good thinking, particularly those that serve as the foundation of effective thinking?

What can parents and teachers do to assist a child to develop good thinking habits?

It is necessary to make sure that there is no confusion over what is meant by good habits of thinking. The English language which is so rich in words in some areas that many words have almost the same meaning is, unfortunately, stingy with words in other areas where there is need to distinguish meaning. One of these areas is "thinking". As much as the writer admires John Dewey's contribution to the psychological understanding of the thought process,<sup>1</sup> he believes that

Dewey tends to oversimplify the problem by making his readers believe that there is one complete act of thought which has the well-known five steps. The writer has been impressed with the complexity and many-sidedness of thinking,<sup>2</sup> and the fact that thinking can be broken down into a number of more elementary constituent processes. It would be well if we had labels with which to distinguish some of the component parts of thinking more clearly so that it would be possible to discuss the thinking process more analytically.

## *Some Criteria of Good Thinking*

The following interpretations of thinking are some that are used by parents and teachers:

(1) A parent will say to a child who has been careless and impulsive, "Stop and think," hoping thereby that he can persuade the child to ponder on the possible outcome of his act before he impulsively launches forth on it. The contrast is also made between the thinker who likes to ponder over issues and the doer who acts more or less impulsively with little prior consideration of the issues involved or the outcomes to be anticipated.

(2) Teachers sometimes refer to a child as being thoughtful when they mean that he is longheaded and given to daydreaming and reverie, having in mind a kind of Paul Dombey—a child given to fanciful thoughts.

<sup>1</sup> *How We Think*. By John Dewey. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> *Education and the Psychology of Thinking*. By P. M. Symonds. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1936.

(3) A child is called thoughtful who has many ideas, whose imagination is prolific and who is fruitful with suggestions and proposals.

(4) A child may be considered thoughtful who has learned methodical ways of meeting his tasks. He is a planner and executes his plans with great precision.

(5) Most parents and teachers consider a child thoughtful who is interested in books, in reading, and in studying. Indeed, so closely is power in thinking associated with books and studying that parents and teachers consider those skills of paramount importance. Consequently, the skillful use of books often becomes the main goal of elementary instruction.

(6) A child is considered thoughtful who has repressed his emotional responses, does not act silly and frivolous but approaches his problems earnestly and seriously.

(7) The curious, investigating, exploring child is usually considered to be a thoughtful child. Thoughtful children ask questions, conduct experiments, and pry into the secrets of nature or of the social life about them.

(8) Alertness and attention to details are sometimes considered to be the prime characteristic of the thoughtful child. It is a sign of good thinking to notice carefully what goes on around one and to pay attention to the details.

(9) Some parents and teachers will equate good thinking with concentration. The essence of good thinking in a child is the quality of persistence, of sticking to the task until it is completed, of being dissatisfied until a workable solution to a problem is reached, and of being able to resist distractions.

(10) Those with a social point of view see the essence of good thinking in the interest shown in controversial issues and the capacity to discuss them intelligently.

(11) Perhaps less frequently good thinking is equated with being argumentative, taking issue with the point of view of another person and holding up one's side in an argument.

(12) Still another meaning of good thinking is the tendency to believe only those generalizations which have been scientifically demonstrated as true, or which one has proven for himself by adequate personal experience, and to resist accepting every new point of view which is proposed without sufficient evidence.

(13) And finally, good thinking may be defined as freedom from gullibility, from accepting everything that one reads, from being an easy prey to influence by suggestion.

In this article good thinking may be taken to mean all of these and possibly others which have not been mentioned. It should be possible, however, to tie them together and to find a thread which runs through them all. If it were necessary to attempt to define what is meant by good habits of thinking, it could be said that they consist of the habit of approaching difficult situations by studying them, appreciating the issues involved, estimating possible outcomes, and reaching a reasoned decision as a guide to action. Based on this preliminary consideration of the outcomes of possible courses of action, thinking then should precede and determine action.

### ***Factors Involved in the Development of Thinking***

A detailed analysis of thinking will not be attempted here but a brief review of the factors involved in the development of thinking may be helpful.<sup>3</sup>

Thinking depends on certain fundamental physical factors which include not only good health, good nutrition, and physical vigor but also fine, well-adjusted sense organs. Inasmuch as ability to read is such an important factor in effective thinking, a serviceable pair of eyes is an indispensable tool.

Much of thinking is determined by patterns of conduct established early in life, perhaps in the first two or three years. As an infant's perception develops, he learns to react to aspects and features of an object as standing for the complete object. As his motor control develops, he learns habits and skills which are necessary for all subsequent thinking. Coordinations of sense and motor adaptation through grasping ob-

<sup>3</sup> Editor's Note: See the author's book, *Education and the Psychology of Thinking*, for a more detailed discussion, and illustrations of factors.

jects give the child his first perception of form, position and size which makes the basic elements of later thinking.

To the degree that these first perceptions are accurate and are free from confusion, the growing child is forming a foundation for later effective use of his mind. As he is able to sense likenesses and differences with increased accuracy and refinement and learns the meaning of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, completeness and incompleteness, equality and inequality, as well as the many relationships represented by the prepositions on, in, out, above, below, beside, at, he is increasing his ability to make comparisons, to manipulate propositions, and to draw inferences. A child ordinarily makes these initial adjustments by his experiences in the home with its furniture, utensils, tools, doors, windows, and with his own toys. Nursery education which contributes to effectiveness in thinking and planning should give attention to providing these experiences more surely and systematically.

Another basic element in good thinking is the possession of an adequate stock of clearly formulated concepts. Language helps by providing names for concepts and the growth of a child's vocabulary parallels the growth of his thinking capacity. Wise parents and teachers will insure that a child becomes skillful in the use of words.

All thinking depends on a background of previous experience. Without past experience one does not have a basis for effectively meeting new situations. A child whose experience is limited to a narrow environment will be equally handicapped in his capacity to think. The child who has had an opportunity to have many and varied experiences, who has visited shops and

factories, has participated in or observed many processes, activities, and events and has traveled widely has at least the groundwork on which effective thinking can be built.

Not only must there be wide and generous experience but the child who is to learn to think must be helped to relate his experiences. The good teacher is one who helps pupils to fit things together, to see how the parts are arranged, to help a child see the function of parts. When a class visits a foundry, the teacher points out the purpose of the glass insulation, the functions of the different levers by which the operator guides his machine, how the handle fits into its socket, and how it is fastened. One of the most important functions of the teacher in assisting in the development of thinking is the pointing out of relationships.

To be an effective thinker a child must be free from inhibition. This means that his parents and his teachers must not place unnecessary brakes and restrictions on his curiosity and his tendency to explore. They must not say "hush hush" to his questions or shunt him off from areas which they consider too dangerous or difficult for him to experience. "Any education which forms a taboo, a scruple, an inhibition, a superstition or a fixed idea creates a very effective dam to the thinking process in that area."<sup>4</sup>

Good thinking involves an orderly stock of concepts. It is part of the task of education not only to help children to form concepts but to arrange them in some orderly fashion. Children should be taught how things go together and should become acquainted with and assimilate some of the orderly

<sup>4</sup> Symonds, *Op. Cit.* P. 227.



classifications by which science orders its data. There is a tendency in schools today to decry order, system, and classification, but a confused jumble of concepts and principles is not going to help a child become an orderly thinker.

There are a number of habits which help to make thinking more effective. A thoughtful child has learned to approach a problem situation with an inquiring problem attitude. He has learned to ask himself questions which enable him to analyze and see relationships in a difficult area. The thoughtful child is forever relating things. He has learned to stick with a problem and is dissatisfied until he has reached a satisfactory conclusion. The thoughtful child insists on checking and verifying his results. He has learned the value of keeping records. Finally, the thoughtful child cares about the outcome. He has real curiosity concerning matters which he does not understand, is impatient until the mystery is cleared up.

There are a number of skills which contribute to power in thinking. In almost any field skill with numbers in counting and computing, as well as in measuring, aids in precise and effective thinking. Language skills loom large in importance in effective thinking. There are the many separate kinds of reading ability, each of which makes its own contribution to the effectiveness of thinking in different kinds of situations and with different kinds of problems.

Many individuals would consider skill in drawing inferences as the heart of the thinking process. However, ability to draw correct inferences is an end product and this ability depends upon many habits and skills which have already been recounted. In particular, being able to infer correctly depends

on skill in comparing and noting likeness and differences, more or less, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality. The growth of thinking should be paralleled by an increasing sense of elementary probability. The large number of persons who hover about gambling machines hoping that a turn of luck will bring them the desired combination of apples, oranges, plums and peaches testifies to an astounding ignorance of the elementary laws of probability.

Finally, effective thinking depends upon a clearly outlined set of values. One must not only know how to estimate outcomes but also to become aware of what outcomes are of greater or less importance. The home and school have not completed their task when they have helped children to perform the correct mental processes. They should also aid children in formulating and weighing values so that they know not only what outcomes to expect but also what outcomes they want.

#### *How Parents and Teachers May Help*

Many of the points to be made in discussing how parents and teachers may help children to form good habits of thinking are not the results of experimental investigation but are deductions from general psychological theory and the applications of this theory to the problems of education.

Thinking is probably in large part a matter of *identification*. Children learn to think by copying the thought habits and patterns of those with whom they most closely associate. Thinking is learned in much the same way that language is learned. A child learns to use language in the second year by imitating the sounds made to him by his parents and siblings as they help him

to communicate with them and thereby achieve his wishes. Thinking in like manner is learned by a child by a process of imitation through copying the thought patterns of those about him as a way of satisfying his needs and meeting his wishes.

Thinking, however, is not nearly the open and easily observable process that language is. For this reason, in part, thinking develops more slowly and less surely than language. Parents would do well if they were to think out loud before their children and give them open examples of their thought processes and how they reach their decisions. In general, children will adopt the pattern of thought set for them by their parents—the tendency to weigh issues, to consider the conclusions before acting, to demand evidence, to reach decisions without the influence of emotion, and so on for a long list of modes of thinking.

Children would also be helped by open and free discussion in the family and in the school. Discussion representing the acme of thought processes would give them illustrations of and practice in good thinking to the extent that parents and teachers are able to show leadership in these areas.

Parents can prepare for thinking by providing their children with wide experiences. Children should be encouraged to think about problems in their immediate environment. It is not necessary to find abstract and remote problems to serve as practice material. They should be helped to think about various issues as they arise in everyday activity. One does not have to wait for a course in physics in order to understand principles of conduction and convection of heat. Even little children can be taught that in order to cool an overheated room

it is as necessary to turn off the source of heat as it is to open a window to let in cool air.

In line with our general knowledge concerning learning it will aid thinking if it can be made pleasurable. A child is never helped to think constructively by being ridiculed for his efforts. Rather, a child should be praised for a well-considered answer, a thoughtful attempt to meet a problem situation, and any effort to anticipate the outcomes of action.

Not only will thinking grow through praise and appreciation but parents and teachers should give encouragement and assist the child to guard against hasty generalizations, against drawing conclusions from contradictory or inconsistent evidence or against permitting desire and prejudice to influence a decision.

Children should be encouraged to ask questions. There comes a time in the life of every child—about the age of four—when he wishes to satisfy his curiosity concerning his place in the world around him, the relations between people and between himself and other people, and also where he came from and whither he is going. Even though inconvenienced, parents should respect a child's questions at this age and guard against repressing them or showing annoyance when they become too persistent. It is true that when this curiosity has been satisfied, the pressure of questions will naturally diminish. It is indeed unfortunate for future thinking if a child's curiosity is crushed.

When parents answer a child's questions they should phrase the answer in words that he can understand. Naturally an explanation that has complete scientific validity cannot be given to every question. Parents should recog-

nize that frequently when he asks questions he is as concerned with his security in the world about him and particularly with those whom he loves as he is to have a full-fledged scientific answer. Parents, therefore, in answering a child's questions should not merely provide an answer and give reasons for the answer, but should allay his anxiety and give him security by helping him believe that he belongs and is loved.

Another bit of advice to parents and teachers in helping a child grow in his capacity to think is to give him freedom to experiment and a chance to work out his own solutions. Children should be encouraged to think for themselves and to reach their own decisions about issues that concern them. Their thinking may be partial, inexact, childish, and immature; nevertheless, it is their own thinking and to the extent that their efforts are appreciated and rewarded and good examples given to them to follow, their proficiency in thinking will grow.

Along this line, parents should admit their own fallibility and their own mistakes. Many parents set themselves up as paragons of wisdom and make their children believe that they never make mistakes and that they are omniscient. It would help children to grow in thinking if they could realize that their own processes of thinking are of the same kind as their parents and that their parents make mistakes as they do. With this attitude they can be encouraged to dare to think and to experiment and thus stimulate their thought processes to grow and mature.

In helping children to be honest in their thinking and to avoid rationalization, parents must avoid asking a child to explain his behavior with the threat of punishment if the explanation is un-

satisfactory. To require a child to justify his deeds will force him to seek out acceptable, even if untrue, explanations and will encourage deceit and departure from reality. Instead of being able to focus his attention on the problems about him, he must direct his reasoning processes to meet the demands of persons who hold control over him. No child can learn to think if he is threatened when he does not give a satisfactory answer or explanation to those to whom he is responsible.

This article has attempted to accomplish three things:

First, it has considered what it means for a child to grow in this thinking. Several varieties of good habits of thinking were listed and a definition which attempted to assimilate a number of the more important points of view about good thinking was made.

Second, thinking was broken down into some of its constituent elements, and indicated how progress in building habits of good thinking must be made along a number of lines. Thinking becomes the assembling of a number of constituent habits and skills.

Third, some of the more elementary things that a parent or teacher can do to encourage good habits of thinking in a child were discussed. It was pointed out that thinking like language is learned by imitation. If parents and teachers wish to help children to become more effective thinkers they should set patterns of good thinking themselves, provide real opportunities for problem solving, make thinking pleasurable by showing appreciation or praise, and give children the freedom for experimentation in the solution of problems they meet in everyday life.



# All Children Think and Plan

Through anecdotal accounts of children's experiences Mrs. Webb, supervising principal in the Washington, D. C., public schools, traces sequences of growth in thinking and planning. She points out the implications of these experiences in terms of their contributions to enriched living at each stage of development and to the processes involved in reflective thinking and adequate planning.

**A** TWO-AND-ONE-HALF-YEAR-OLD, after visiting the zoo, related his experiences. "And dere were monkeys. Dey were hoppin' all awound, hangin' wif dier tails. I fought dey'd fall, but dey din't."

Generalizing from past experiences he knew that jumping around on high places was not safe, especially if one had only a tail to hang by. Judging from what usually happened to him, he thought the monkeys should have fallen. He was surprised when they didn't.

In another conversation he asked his mother. "How's your eye? Where's the mecrucome gone?"

Not only had he thought about the eye but he had also remembered his reactions at the time that it had been hurt. His personal experience with hurt places and his prior knowledge of the use of mercurochrome served as points of departure in his thinking. Reasoning from analogous experiences he reached what constituted for his two-and-one-half-year-oldness, a valid conclusion. The fact that no medicine had been used was beside the point. He was generalizing on the basis of similar situations and figuring things out for himself.

Thinking and reasoning are based on past experience and prior knowledge.

The infant thinks in a very rudimentary fashion. During the earliest stages of development the baby's problem of adjusting to his physical environment determines his thinking. Such thinking, if it can be so called, consists of selecting and arranging for use those random movements which prove successful.

As the child grows older his vocabulary and language are essentially egocentric. He thinks out loud and carries on a running commentary about what he is doing. He figures things out for himself, making generalizations after even one occurrence of an event.

## *Imitation Helps to Develop Concepts*

Imitation provides a strong stimulus for rapid progress of thought. Imitation of everyday happenings, as well as of interesting, varied, complex or novel activities of adults, is meaningful because it helps the child to develop concepts of the world about him. The development, clarification and organization of these concepts are fundamental to his growing intellectual resources. They provide him with a rich store of experiences and knowledges from which to draw in thinking and planning.

A four-year-old sitting in a playhouse was quietly absorbed in her self-appointed tasks, planning her activities over a sustained period of time in soli-

tary contentment. She handled carefully a ragged old doll, undressing it, bathing it in a basin and drying it with great tenderness exactly as she had seen her mother handle the baby many, many times. She took care of all the small details such as holding her hand behind the doll's head, carefully washing ears and eyes, testing the water with her elbow, and giving attention to other details involved in the care of a very young baby. After dressing the doll, she fed it, then rocked it, crooning soft lullabies. Fully half an hour later she was seen pushing the doll carriage around and around the room, taking her baby for an airing.

During all this time the little girl spoke to no one and no one spoke to her. She was playing with a single purpose, completely absorbed in subordinating the physically present into the ideally signified. She was building experience and developing firsthand knowledges and understandings for future use.

#### ***Firsthand Experiencing and Problem Solving***

Thinking and reasoning become more apparent as children begin to exchange ideas with each other and to use language more thoughtfully. They continue to live in a here-and-now world for some time to come with thinking, planning and evaluating growing naturally out of their firsthand experiencing.

A group of five-year-olds was playing in the store which they had constructed. Everyone wanted to work behind the counter as a clerk, to deliver orders or to be a customer. The store soon became crowded as busy storekeepers hustled about to answer the telephone, to pack orders or to wait on impatient customers. The congested

condition brought forth many complaints and demands for adult help. The teacher stood quietly by watching the activities with interest and noting problems as they arose. Just then bang! Down came one side of the store.

"Come here and sit with me on the rug and let's talk about the trouble you are having," suggested the teacher.

"There's too many people in the store. It's too crowded. I can't play. Somebody ought to get out and make room," chorused the children as they sat down on the floor.

Each complaint was stated and its cause was sought. Before the discussion was concluded several children went into the store to judge how many could play there satisfactorily at one time. Five was the number agreed upon. The group was able to identify its needs and to suggest action to overcome the difficulties which made play in the store unsatisfactory.

What a wise teacher to provide opportunities for the children to know through firsthand experiencing what their needs were and how to meet them. Had she been more concerned with orderly and peaceful play than with child growth, she might easily have excluded the possibility of thoughtful analysis by arbitrarily setting up rules for play before the need for such rules had been felt by her group. This teacher's approach emphasized readiness to think effectively and, through simple evaluation, to plan for subsequent group activity on a higher level.

#### ***Thinking Things Through and Becoming Sensitive to Cause and Effect***

Eight years of living and experiencing, thinking and planning give children the ability to see through to conclusions, contexts and implications where earlier they have seen only parts

of the whole process. An eight-year-old can and often does verbalize his ideas and problems. He is becoming sensitive to cause and effect relationships because he is more capable of thinking things through. He has established the ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality. Here are two incidents that by comparison illustrate this growing ability:

(1) A five-year-old, imitating adult reactions, had painted a large yellow house. When asked to tell about it she leaned over and very softly whispered to the teacher, "It's a Negro house. That's why it's so wobbly."

(2) "We are all colored," said eight-year-old Martha, "only some people are darker than others." This was the conclusion she had reached after a long conversation with her principal. They had just driven by a school for colored children and Martha had observed that the patrol boys seemed so businesslike.

"Some of my friends say that the patrol boys of our school are better because they are white," continued Martha. "But Sally and I don't think so. We talk a lot about these things and we finally decided that there is really no difference at all. You see, we are all colored, only some of us are colored darker than others."

At this age children begin to be concerned about their own performance. They talk about it freely and without fear or shame. A group of boys engaged in the following conversation about what makes a thing difficult to learn:

*Edward:* When I don't pay attention it makes things hard for me.

*Van:* Some people just aren't made to do certain things. For instance, some people are just born to be actors. They take to it quickly.

*Don:* I couldn't read. Mother read to me all the time but later I got interested. I learned to put expression in my reading. Then I learned to read.

*Edward:* I always forget the composition I have planned to write because I worry about the punctuation.

*Bill:* I forget after a vacation. I find it awful hard to concentrate then.

*Don:* Yes, I make lower marks after I return from a vacation.

*Van:* I'm not interested in making models and it's hard. I can't do it.

*Bill:* Well, what's hardest for me is writing. I'm left handed.

*Albert:* And I can't draw.

*Don:* I can't get action. I need some talent and I haven't got it.

*Van:* I have a nice image but I can't ever get it on the paper.

*Bill:* Well, in drawing, some things are more useful than others. Now take imagination. That's important. Without it, you just have to learn to draw. You need self-assurance.

*Johnny:* I can draw a man by noticing my own motions but I can't draw birds.

*Edward:* At the Cathedral the choir master talks to us. He says to sing fast then we will stay on the key. Maybe if you drew fast you could draw birds and things.

*Tom:* When the teacher says not to spoil my picture with the wrong color then I can't do it. I'm nervous about it.

*Van:* I can write a poem easily.

*Bill:* What you have to learn is to listen and concentrate.

*Roy:* It's important to get a good foundation! My arithmetic has a poor foundation. I went to so many schools.

*Edward:* It is important to review your spelling and arithmetic all of the time.

*George:* Yea, but when the teacher compliments me it makes me do better. But I don't usually do well. I'm careless.

*John:* Say you can't do it, then you can't.

These boys were appraising what happens to them and what they cause to happen. They are beginning to discipline themselves through an interest in improving their own activity as the result of exchanging mutual suggestions and criticisms.

Children at eight are definitely conscious of the group to which they belong. They see themselves more realistically as individuals belonging to a group of other individuals. They talk about their own and their classmates' performances. Some statements chosen at random from a group's evaluation of a rhythmical interpretation illustrate the fact that evaluations are often con-



ditioned by values considered most pertinent to each individual need or success. Three of the responses also indicate that the children realized the great value of this whole school activity from kindergarten through sixth grade in terms of individual effort which resulted in group achievement.

I learned not to be self-conscious when I get up in front of the children.

It was good to just let go and do the things you feel.

It was fun to work with children who are younger.

It was a success and one reason for this was the way the big children worked so well with the little children.

It was good because we all acted so nicely and did not even feel silly, though I thought at first that I was going to.

It was fun because we got to suggest so many things.

The squirrels with the swords could have stood a little straighter than they did, but then that is such a little thing anyway.

The dances were beautiful because they had a lot of spirit in them.

#### ***Planning That Is Self-motivated***

The eight-year-old is likely to keep busy organizing spontaneous club groups which may not live very long. But by the time he is nine or ten he becomes a business-like, realistic, self-motivated individual interested in the rules and procedures of his club life.

Billy was nine years old and his hobby was collecting stamps. He was faced with the problem of interesting other boys and girls in stamps in order that he might make his club a part of the school program. The teacher was gratified at the initiative Billy showed and offered to help him in any way that she could. But Billy needed no help. He was a self-motivated, reasonable and responsible nine-year-old. He, like many other children of his age, was capable of making his blueprint on paper before beginning to act.

He enthusiastically organized his club and put the members to work searching history and other reference books for materials on early American stamps. It was not long before the children had located six references which they turned over to Billy who marked the places in each book and began to type copies of the bibliography for each member.

Billy's typing was a long and slow process but he was finally satisfied with the way it looked. As he gave a copy to each child, the teacher overheard him say, "Now all of you do some careful reading before the next meeting, d'ye hear?"

The following week at the class meeting Billy reported the activities of the stamp club.

"I have talked with Frank who is vice-chairman of the Central High School Stamp Club. He is going to come over and help us to organize our club. He will help us to make a constitution, too. I also went last Saturday to see Miss Miller of the Smithsonian Institution. She promised to come and talk with us as soon as we get going. Who would like to take a trip with me next Saturday to the museum to become better acquainted with the rare stamps collected there?"

Here were tentative plans for several weeks to come and Billy was able to take care of changes and needs as they emerged. His enthusiasm was so great and his plans so well developed that the teacher found herself on many occasions going along with the club members to visit the museum, or to call on a community friend noted for his collection. She even found herself trading stamps with friends to get a coveted one which some member of the club "just had to have."

## ***Division of Labor, Records of Progress and Processes of Working***

Children in the upper elementary school recognize the value of division of labor and the benefits derived from pooled thinking. They like to make inventories and check lists. They are efficient at organizing plans and working out ways of obtaining and ordering their information. For example, Ruth told parents and friends who had been invited to a tea of South American foods, "We thought of the things we wanted to make and do and of all the things we needed to know to answer our questions. We listed all of these on the blackboard and divided them into groups. From these groupings we saw what our committees needed to be. They were organized and each child selected the committee on which he wished to serve. The group elected its chairman and secretary to keep the records of meetings and progress and we set to work. We have committees for literature, art, exhibits, maps and charts and one for dramatics."

The literary committee had seven members and their minutes read in part:

The members of the Literary Club are doing these things: Jack is making a book of stories from South America. Pete is making a book of references and interesting facts about silver mining in South America. Tommy is interested in South American food; he is working out a menu for a day. Helen is making a dictionary of Spanish words we come across; she is illustrating it with pictures. Louise is helping Helen. Ruth is making a scrap book of interesting facts. Emily had not yet decided what to do.

*Rules for our committee:* Our committee is to write compositions, draw pictures, write poems, make collections of interesting information and make books. Each person in the group is supposed to do one of these things at least.

*Standards for our evaluation period:* (1) Give a short talk about any work you show. (2) Tell where you got your information. (3) Tell how long it will take you to finish what you are making or doing. (4) Tell how you intend to use it.

*March 19:* We had a meeting to decide what we should do about a cover for our literary report. We decided that we would each draw his idea for the cover at home and present it to the committee at the next meeting and the committee would choose a cover. It was also decided that the person whose cover was chosen would be able to put it on the book.

*March 20:* The committee worked very quietly today, therefore we accomplished a great deal. We followed our standards and no one acted silly.

*March 24:* We took a trip to the botanical gardens. This trip helped our committee because it gave the children in it some good ideas for pictures of plant life.

The minutes of the exhibit committee showed a listing on one page of "What we planned to do" and on the next page "What we did." Other items included:

*March 19:* Our committee worked very well except that we did not follow a few of our standards, which are: (1) Be polite and courteous; (2) Mind your own business; (3) Work neatly and cleanly; (4) Act sensible, be helpful, and work quietly. . . . We will have to learn to clean up faster. . . .

*March 24:* Our trip to the museum helped our committee by helping us to learn how to organize an exhibit.

*March 27:* We made new standards for our committee because the old ones did not help us much. They are as follows: (1) Did we make good use of our time? (2) Did we make good use of our material? (3) Did our committee do enough work? (4) Did every child do his best work? (5) Has every person been prompt, cooperative, courteous and efficient?

*April 20:* We held a meeting with only the chairmen and secretaries of all the groups. In this meeting we decided where our exhibits would go and what work had to be completed for the whole class.

The map and chart committee also made standards for its group and kept

a very strict accounting of each of the ten members of the committee. They were marked present and their work was followed closely. Plans for sharing were also a part of the minutes of this group.

These fifth grade children showed great interest in processes. As the minutes illustrate, the children analyzed their behavior before as well as during action and then set up standards for evaluation.

In the exhibit committee it is noteworthy that the children themselves discovered after about ten days that the standards which they had set for themselves were not functional. They did not express it in such terms but they realized that the first four standards were absolutes and that what they needed were a few specific checks which would measure definite aims and purposes of the group.

The second set of standards for evaluation evolved by the group on March 27 are infinitely more realistic and practical, though at times the children still had difficulty in evaluating efficiency, courtesy and cooperation. They gradually came to the realization that each person has a different scale of values in such areas. It was with this realization that there emerged some good independent critical thinking. All of the boys and girls took keen emotional and intellectual pleasure in measuring up to their expectations in both behavior and accomplishments.

### ***The Use of Language and the Beginning of Social Planning***

One evidence that children in the upper elementary school are developing an increasingly realistic conception of the world is seen in their conversations. They use language now, less for its own sake and more as a tool. They are con-

scious of the beginnings of social planning. They share confidences and estimates of self and others with whom they come in contact. They are aware of the importance of preparation for a future vocation and sense something of adult responsibility.

Six boys were talking about themselves and the future:

*Tom:* The older you get the more you realize that you've gotta' do something. You have to learn if you are ever going to amount to anything.

*Ed:* If you want to learn, you can learn. You want to grow up to be something in your life.

*Pat:* Yes, but you have to be interested to learn things.

*Al:* Some people have ambitions and they learn because they need to, like if you are going to be an engineer, you just have to know arithmetic.

*Jim:* Anyway, you have to know arithmetic for business in later life.

*Pat:* Gee, I was dumb in the first grade but I was eager to learn more and more. But anyway the worst person in the room in arithmetic may become the greatest astronomer. You just can't tell.

*Dan:* It's awfully important to read the papers so that you know what is going on in the world.

*Pat:* Sometimes it is your experiences that will help you to decide what you want to be. For instance, my father and I were taking a walk in New York State. We came across a house in the country with the name of the man on the gate. My father said that he was an inventor. I asked my father if we could go in and speak to him. My father said that he was an important man. But, we went in anyway. He certainly was nice to us. We rang the doorbell and introduced ourselves. He showed us his inventions. Then he invited us to have dinner with him. He showed us many things he had invented such as toys, houseware and lots of other things. Because he was so kind even though he was an important person and because he made such interesting inventions, I have always wanted to be like him. I want to be an inventor.

*Ed:* I would like to build planes and boats. I have fifteen models of planes and six models



of boats. I started this hobby when I saw some boys fooling with airplanes out in Oregon. I have wanted to fly in the Marine Corps ever since I was a baby. I started this hobby to show myself that I could build things out of wood.

*Jim:* I have an ambition to be a navigator on a destroyer in the Navy. About a year ago we got our beach house and I got to know a man that owned some fishing boats. Lots of times he let me guide his fishing boats from the canal where he kept them to the pier where he met his fishing parties.

*Pat:* The most important thing to do is to learn many things about different subjects and things . . . then you can decide what you want to learn in college . . . what you want to be.

### ***The Need to Act on What We Know***

What is becoming known of child growth and development indicates that children of elementary school age are not often capable of working with abstract principles. The young child reasons from meager data, sometimes only one occurrence of an event because this may be the only analogous situation in his store of knowledge. He must live richly and fully, experiencing in many situations the realities of the world about him before he can adequately reason on assumptions and through generalizations.

The world is a place of fantasy for the young child; he is literally unable to distinguish between the real and the imagined. As he grows older and matures intellectually, he adds many firsthand experiences to his store of knowledge, constantly clarifying his concepts through the process of acting and re-

acting. Only then does he begin to distinguish between that which is real and that which is fantasy. He will ask of a story, "Is it a real story or a make-believe story?"

Eight, nine, ten, eleven years of living bring to him a great desire to know facts—many, many facts. "What is it like?" "How does it work?" It is only as the child grows older and more experienced that he begins to sense the subtleties of reflective thinking. Not until he is more mature will he be able to turn the thing over and over in his mind hunting for additional evidence; seeking new data that will develop the suggestion and that will either bear it out or else make it obvious that judgment must be suspended and that he must use more and new materials to corroborate or refute the first suggestions that occur.

Have we in our eagerness to teach children limited the amount of necessary, functional firsthand experiencing? Have we placed children in situations where they are expected to generalize and verbalize too soon on insufficient data, limited experience and meager knowledge? All children think and plan but to at last develop the ability to maintain a state of doubt and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry—the essentials of reflective thinking and of adequate planning—we must be sure that each stage of development is richly and fully realized.

**W**HAT IS MATURITY? IT IS THE ABILITY TO SEE a job through. It is the inherent desire always to give more than is asked in a given situation. It is the quality of dependability that makes other people say, "There's a reliable person." It is independence of thought and action. Maturity represents the capacity to cooperate; to work with others; to work in an organization and to work under authority. The mature person is pliable and can alter his own desires according to time, persons, circumstances. He is tolerant, he is patient, he is adaptable, he is human. Maturity is the basis of morale in the individual.—From "What's Wrong with American Mothers," by EDWARD A. STRECKER. (*Saturday Evening Post*, October 26, 1946.)

# How Well Can We Know Our Children?

If we would know the children we teach, we must give them opportunities to reveal themselves to us—what they are thinking, what they are feeling, their fears and their joys. Miss Lewis, research associate, Bank Street Schools, New York City, names "spontaneity" as the common denominator through which children reveal themselves, and discusses ways in which spontaneity may be released.

**T**HE OLDER I GROW THE MORE I AM impressed by the fact that all roads do seem to lead to "Rome." In other words, much of my thinking lately on the various educational problems that have been confronting me has taken me along devious routes until in every case I seem to have arrived at one denominator which is common to all—"spontaneity."

For instance, it is impossible to consider the whole question of what children really think about without at once recognizing that we are not likely to find out what they think about unless they have habits of expressing themselves spontaneously. No sooner have we recognized this and conjured up a mental image of a "spontaneous" child than we must go a little further and admit that a "spontaneous" child is not always a pleasant and polite child, nor the easiest for the harassed adult to handle. He may be the very child who calls his teacher "Miss Stink" and tells her that he hates her and would like to chop her head off.

Here we have arrived, willy nilly, at that question of "aggression" which surely occupies a good portion of the thinking of all of us. Spontaneity is at the core here, too. For the children

who *express* their angry feelings are the ones who are *allowed* to do so by adults who want them to build up confidence in themselves and to recognize and learn to handle their feelings as perfectly legitimate emotions, regardless of whether or not they are always polite and gracious feelings. Thus "spontaneity," it seems to me, has a great deal to do with the development of self-confidence in a child, and self-confidence means courage to say what one thinks and to *believe* in what one thinks.

And so we are right back where we started from. These roads all lead not only to Rome but home again. We cannot get away from "spontaneity."

## *Spontaneity Is a Subtle Thing*

I suppose that my attention is focusing on this particular aspect of behavior because of the work I have been doing lately in public schools. It has struck me forcibly that many of our children are living through their days in anything but a spontaneous manner, learning to "give answers" to please the teachers rather than themselves, learning to refrain from talking about the things that really interest them most except in brief contacts with each other during recess. And this has surprised me because on the surface many of the

teachers responsible for these children have appeared to be warm and human people, keenly interested in and fond of children and in many ways giving these children a good school life.

But spontaneity is a subtle thing. One can easily be deceived about it. It does not imply merely the freedom to move about and talk in a classroom, as might be supposed. Its ingredients are not those "surface" freedoms.

This became very clear to me during a recent experiment I was carrying on in two second grade classrooms. I was not testing the children's spontaneity, primarily. The test I was administering was a part of a large study of classroom atmospheres and its purpose was simply to provide me with more information about the children and their thoughts and feelings than I could get from observation alone. The "test" itself was merely a simile game. I sat down with the children and asked them to tell me what were the "saddest things in the world," the happiest, the prettiest, the ugliest, and so on.

As I said, I was not thinking about "spontaneity" primarily before this test, but I soon had it thrust upon me. In one of these classrooms there was what I thought quite a free atmosphere. The teacher understood the need of young children to be active and there was a good deal of "normal noise" in this room. But the answers of the children on this test were not completely spontaneous at first; they were calculated to please me. The children tended to repeat parrot-like the things they had learned as school lessons. For instance, when I asked them what were the "happiest things in the world," instead of spontaneous child-like answers such as "Christmas" or "ice cream," I was given such artificial replies as "eating

spinach," and "saving money." The children could not seem to believe that I was not driving home some lesson or other, that I simply wanted them to be themselves. Apparently they were not used to this in school.

In the other classroom, however, I encountered something quite different. To the superficial observer the atmosphere in this classroom was less "free" than that in the first one. That is, the teacher was a little afraid of noise and kept the children under more control than the first teacher did. There was freedom in this room, to be sure, and the teacher's methods of discipline were never harsh, but at the same time the children always seemed to be doing what they should be doing and in a general atmosphere of quiet control—sometimes too quiet, I thought.

Yet, when I sat down with these children and asked them to tell me "the happiest things," the spontaneous answers came bursting forth at once—"Christmas," "to have a birthday," "spring," "Easter," "Hallowe'en," "to play with a toy car," "to ride a bike."

A "spontaneous" relationship between teacher and children depends upon no such superficial thing as allowing or not allowing the children to move about and talk. It depends more on *what* they are allowed to talk about; it depends on the teacher's fundamental acceptance or non-acceptance of their child-like ways; it depends on her deep understanding and *respect* and liking for children as people in their own right; it depends on her ability to get into their skin and see the world with their eyes and to *like* what she sees.

This teacher, incidentally, who was able to bring out spontaneity in her children even though she kept the atmosphere generally quite controlled



was the teacher who allowed the children occasionally to dramatize such characters as Frankenstein and the Commandos during their free activity period. She did this because she had her eyes and ears open. She noted the sparks of interest that were kindled whenever the children began to talk about these things.

I recall one day, particularly, when I was with her and the class on a walk around the neighborhood. Two little boys who were ordinarily rather apathetic and inarticulate in the classroom became involved in a most animated and dramatic discussion of the Frankenstein movie they had recently seen. Now here was something that apparently answered a deep need in these boys. It was something they could really get enthusiastic over.

The teacher noticed this and was willing to bring it into the classroom because she wanted the children not to have two separate lives but to be themselves in school as well as out of it. She was willing to take their interests, whatever they were, and bring them right out into the open in the classroom and start building on them there. She did not stop with Frankenstein and the Commandos and the comics, but she was not afraid to start with them.

#### *Play Is the Key "Par Excellence"*

It is a pity that in so many of our schools there is little opportunity for the children just to "chat," for it is in their spontaneous and casual conversations together that they often reveal what they *are* interested in. And a teacher needs to know these things if she is going to build a curriculum that has meaning.

It is a pity, too, that really free *play* in the program—so accepted in the

nursery school—is apt to go by the board when the children reach six or seven. Free play is the key *par excellence* to children's true thoughts and feelings and interests, provided, of course, that it really is spontaneous play in an atmosphere where children feel free to play in their own way.

Teachers of the younger elementary ages, I have often observed, easily confuse "a play" with "play." For some reason they seem to feel better if the children are putting on a carefully organized "play" with costumes and rehearsed parts. It is hard for them to accept truly free *play* in the classroom.

At this point I am not going to launch a brief for all the values of free play, all the learnings that accrue. But if teachers want to *know* these young children who are sitting there in front of them passively and obediently at their rows of desks, if they believe in spontaneity and want to encourage it in their children, they should let them *play*. And if any teacher is in doubt that her children *will* play in the classroom, let me say, "Give them a chance." Hand them a few tin dishes, a few old milk cartons, an old hat, a lady's pocketbook, an orange crate, a few blocks, a toy telephone—and then see what happens.

I believe that children cannot help but become spontaneous when they play. I have been in first grade classrooms where there was no "play" and the children's demeanor and behavior could be described by no better words than "awed" and "restrained." I have seen their teachers then introduce a "play period" in just such a way as I have described above, with the help of a few simple materials. I have then seen those children *instantly* thaw out and blossom and become themselves—



A spontaneous relationship between teacher and children depends upon her ability to see the world with their eyes and to like what she sees.

Photographs courtesy  
State Teachers College  
Cedar Falls, Iowa  
and  
Mrs. George Waring  
San Antonio, Texas



Free play is the key *par excellence* to children's true thoughts, feelings and interests.

just like those magic little Japanese paper flowers we used to have that unfolded and took on flower shape and color and form as soon as they were put into water.

I maintain that children reveal so much of themselves when they play that a stranger from Mars reading over

records of their play could form a pretty accurate picture not only of the children concerned but of their culture and how it impinges on them.

#### *The Simile Game and Conversation*

For those teachers who cannot possibly carry on full scale free play periods in their programs, however, I want to

emphasize that there are other ways in which they can get to know the thoughts and feelings of their children.

I recommend highly the "simile game" described above. If the children are spontaneous in their replies they can unwittingly reveal a great deal of themselves which in fact it might be very hard for a teacher to get at in any other way. The "sad" simile is a particularly valuable one to reveal possible anxieties and pressures that children may be carrying around with them. We found a large group of children in one particular neighborhood in New York City whose "sad" concepts were all of a violently catastrophic nature having to do with getting lost, run over, having the house burn and a father get shot. We could not easily have predicted this beforehand from our casual observations of the children in the classroom.

Obviously this simile game can be of use to a teacher, too, if she is in doubt whether or not her children *are* spontaneous in her presence. "Spinach" answers will tell her!

Then, too, a teacher can always fall back on the natural and obvious method of *conversation*, if she wants to know more about her pupils' thoughts and wants to encourage them to think and speak freely and openly. Of course I am referring here to what might better be called "chatting," with no "educational" aim whatsoever. Certainly every school day should allow children some time to discuss their own affairs in their own way, even if these affairs concern nothing more important (in our eyes) than the latest heroic deeds of Superman.

I look back on certain very minor conversational episodes as some of the richest in my whole two and a half year experience of teaching in the

Tennessee mountains. I am thinking particularly of one child—five-year-old Buddy who was the first child I picked up in the car on my daily rounds to collect the children. We had quite a little ride before we came to any other house and Buddy always filled this time with easy conversation in his slow, thoughtful, mountain drawl. "Monologue" would describe it better than "conversation," however.

Buddy simply seemed glad to have that opportunity to let me in on his musings about the nature of man and the world. He rarely wanted any comments from me. He seemed to be an unusually thoughtful child, one who was constantly making cosmic discoveries in the process of fitting together the world's fascinating jig-saw pieces. (Or maybe it wasn't that he was unusually thoughtful. Maybe it simply was that the day offered this opportunity for chatting, this leisurely time when there was nothing else to do but talk, and so I became more aware of his thoughtfulness than I might otherwise have been.)

How well I remember him and his slow, quiet voice. And how moved I am still when I recall the thoughts he used to speak aloud:

"I know what's under the ground. Water." . . . "Miss Lewis, you kin git a thousand tomater seeds for a dollar." . . . "The sun is all over the world." . . . "Miss Lewis, two and two is four." . . . "A drunk man ain't go no sense." . . . "Miss Lewis, you don't need money to buy with. You kin buy on credit." . . . "I wonder why the Conroys moved. They had a good sage field."

Very few of the children I have taught have I known as well as this little Buddy. It was no one's fault but my own. I didn't give them a chance.



## We Make Our Own Plans

In this last article of a series of three about Breathitt County, Kentucky, Mrs. Ellison, assistant to the director of field service for the National Education Association, tells about the cooperative planning done by children, parents, teachers and administrators in these rural schools. She describes the results of some of this planning and gives us a look to the future through young Tim's eyes. Mrs. Ellison wishes to express appreciation to the administrators and teachers, and to the office staff of Mrs. Turner, the county superintendent, whose cooperation made these articles possible.

**"WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR GUESTS** would like to see at our school—our guests who will come for Rural School Charter Week?"

The twenty children's faces—uplifted—held. It was that minute after the throw when all corks are submerged in the stream of thought. Then the corks began bobbing to the surface.

"They'd like to see our new swings."

"And our frog, Stalky."

"And our new curtains."

"They'd like to see our new dressing table."

"And our health charts."

"And our new books and tables."

"And our art center."

"What would they like to see you doing?"

Dead quiet.

"Maybe doing what you do each day?"

Inspiration. "They'd like to hear us play our toy band."

"They'd like to see us play *Streets and Alleys* and *Keep Away*."

And so on and on throughout the fifty-eight schools of Breathitt County, Kentucky, in which Rural School Charter Week was observed last October. In no school of the fifteen we visited last October did we fail to find daily plans outlined on the blackboard.

### **Every School Makes Plans**

Little Red School, Breathitt High's practice school<sup>1</sup> in Jackson, where a selected group of children from grades one through three are taught by Breathitt High's prospective teachers, had the following plans on the board:

Library period

Welcome visitors

Play toy band

Go out for directed play

Work during assigned activity period

The children, following this schedule, escorted us around the room to see their pictures, plants and health charts, and served us cookies to munch while they entertained us with their toy band. Outside in the sunshine, they took turns saying what they would play and in directing the physical exercises.

At Vancleve, a two-teacher school, the children were giving much thought to furnishing a community room. The money had been earned at a pie supper.

The community room was already pleasant in its vivid drapes, a piano, a divan, and a sewing machine. Mabel Spicer, the upper grade teacher, told us, "We have enough money to buy the

<sup>1</sup> Breathitt High also has an opportunity school for selected eighth graders from over the county. Teacher of Little Red School—Amanda Holbrook; Opportunity School—Rachel Deaton. Robert M. Van Horne is principal of Breathitt High.

divan, but it's just borrowed now. We're deciding."

On the blackboard was a list of "Things We Have Bought":

1 victrola and 3 records	1 large heater
1 sewing machine	2 large dish pans
16 yards of drapery	lumber for 3 tables
10 yards of dish towel- ing	10 pounds of clayola finger paint
30 cups and 20 bowls	3 colors of tempo paint
arithmetic work books	6 shades
reading work books	1 butcher knife
3 sets of spoons	

At Turkey, a one-teacher school, we were not expected but the teacher, Angelea Jett, took in her stride the advent of a carload of guests. She and the children were justifiably proud of the pleasant room to which they were adding each day: bird nests and a frog to the science center, a post office in one corner, draw-curtains for the blackboard, dyed window drapes of coarse sacking, a labeled rack for toothbrushes and towels. They pointed out the place where the coatrack would be. They took us outside to see the handwashing bucket that would go on a crosspole.

Everywhere we went we found teachers and students and communities working together, *thinking things through, making their plans*, and then *doing things*. The 1946-47 plans for Caney Consolidated are typical of the plans each school community in the county has made for itself for the year. The goal is stated as follows:

Our goal is the full development of each individual child to the highest degree of which he is capable—socially, mentally, physically, morally and emotionally; also to develop some skill in the handling of tools and materials; to create an interest in the arts and nature.

We believe that the school should be of service to the community. We want our school to become a center of community interest and service. We want all people concerned

to have a part in planning and to base these plans on needs and resources of our community.

Then follows a well-developed seven-point program which includes such objectives as an improved play program, a functional health program, using community workers effectively, informing and working with the community, providing more instructional materials and work shops, improving classroom teaching and providing a four and one-half month kindergarten program. To focus these big general plans, each room of each school makes its daily plans. *Breathitt Grows*, the guide for health and physical education in the elementary schools, suggests:

Children need to decide together what each day's work is to be. It is well to write these plans on the board to insure the following of them. In making these plans the children get practice in thinking, in expressing their thoughts; in developing good attitudes, and in learning to cooperate. A well-directed planning period starts the day off right and insures worthwhile activities for each child. Children will work harder on the things which they have helped to plan.

These plans vary greatly from day to day and from school to school as different needs arise. The following incidents illustrate some of the cooperative planning and working together on the part of the children, teachers and parents at Caney Consolidated.

### *Decorating Projects*

The kindergarten windows opened on a bare, retaining wall which darkened the room and presented an unattractive view. In October plans were made for painting the wall. By the middle of November an attractive native scene had appeared outside the windows: a creek bank with a boy fishing beneath a tree in which a cardinal and a squirrel sit. Under the tree a lizard



**Little Red School in Jackson, Kentucky, where a selected group of children from grades one through three are taught by Breathitt High's prospective teachers.**

**Outside in the sunshine the children took turns saying what they would play and in directing their physical exercises.**



**Our new homemade swings. We used one of our natural resources to make them.**

crawls and a rabbit hops about. Nearby are a mother cow and calf, and a chicken. A duck swims on the water.

The painting was done by two Breathitt High art classes but the kindergarten children shared in the planning. Robert Sentz, the art teacher, brought his two classes out for a day's visit with the kindergarten. The children talked about what they would like to have on the wall. Then the art students went back to their school and drew the plans. When they returned with paint and equipment, the kindergarten children





had to vacate their room for a while. Windows must be raised for the art students to climb through to the wall and the equipment and supplies took up much space inside the kindergarten room.<sup>2</sup>

When the kindergarten children came back into their room, the wall had been improved by great splashes of green that would ultimately be a tree and grass, and great splashes of blue that would be sky and water. The children hurried to the windows and stood open-mouthed. With all the talk that had gone on, they had not visualized this miracle of color.

Elizabeth Sutton, educational coordinator, then talked with the kindergarten about what should be on the wall—the animals of the forest, the animals at home, the bird in the tree—trying to correlate their ideas with those of the high school art students. Although there had been talk of a red-bird, now when Miss Sutton asked what kind of bird they wanted, the answer was “A blue bird.”

As she hesitated momentarily over what to do next, somebody else said “A yellow bird.”

When she told them what the cardinal meant to Kentucky and described it in detail, they decided unanimously that it was “a redbird” they wanted.

Caney upper-grade children, at the time the basement project was underway, undertook the redecoration of the lunch room. The entrance hall was painted a bright turquoise and the border around the top of the lunchroom proper became—instead of the “cow-cumber” flower, first under considera-

tion—the Virginia creeper of a variety that grows on the playground.

While the older students were lending their talents to the kindergarten and the lunchroom, all grades made plans and began working cooperatively on friezes of native scenes for their classrooms. Each room chose a different scene, typical of their community environment: hog-killing; ploughing around a mountainside; a quiet evening at home with knitting, popping corn, resting; folk dancing; truck mining; logging; a swinging bridge with a rural post office; and a stir-off at sorghum-making.

While they were working on these choices, a flock of wild geese flew over the school and a frieze was added to include them.

#### *Construction Activities and Community Pride*

During this same late October weather, the elementary school children worked in shifts outdoors, making a six by nine feet papier-mache map of the community. And, inspired by their work with papier-mache, they made masks for Hallowe'en and Christmas at the same time.

At the beginning of the school year in July, Caney boys found they needed a rip saw. Together they planned to make one. With a blade, a section of an old inner tube and a stirrup that had been junked, the boys and a community worker contrived a passable saw. One of the boys was operating it in the basement when we visited the school. The pressure of his foot in the stirrup brought the blade down and the elasticity of the rubber band brought it into place again. He was doing a pretty good job of sawing sections of lumber in lengths that might have been de-

<sup>2</sup>The girls of the art classes wore dungarees and painted alongside the boys, standing on high stools outside the windows, working in five- to eight-person shifts. The first coat, or sizing of the wall, required three gallons of paint.

signed for a bookcase. Though perhaps they were shelves for the new kitchen.

Caney Consolidated is to have a new kitchen, a new dining room, and a new gym. Construction is already in progress. A home economics instructor comes once a week to work with the upper elementary girls in home making. These girls obtained suggestions from the supervising principal, from their teachers and, with the home economics instructor, made their plans for the kitchen. It is to be both convenient and beautiful. By their specifications, the boys have sawed the shelves.

The construction of the kitchen has not yet advanced to the point where shelves are needed. In the interim, these sawed lengths of lumber have been arranged in the nutrition room for exhibit shelves. Here, sewing, weaving, agricultural products (Caney has a school garden), and art work exhibits are changed periodically.

The two pigs at Caney are well cared for. They arrived on a Friday. In the concern given to deciding on and erecting a temporary shelter for them, completing the many Friday chores, and in meeting a schoolbus deadline the supervising principal, Carrie Hunt, forgot to see that arrangements were made for care of the pigs during Saturday and Sunday. All week end she worried but she was far away from school and had no way to return. It was a relief to learn on Monday that patron after patron had been by to see about them and to feed them. Now Caney boys have planned and built a new pigpen for them. In the winter there will be a hogkilling.

In speaking of the spirit that prevails at Caney, one could hardly overlook Albert Landrum who is so much more than a janitor. Mr. Landrum left

a better salaried job in a nearby city because he wanted his children to be in the country and to go to school at Caney. He has five children in the school.

Everything about the school concerns him. When the furnace was threatened with ruin in a flood he, with a group of boys, made a circuit of miles to reach the school and held a twelve-hour vigil to ward off as much damage as possible. When school opened in 1946, Mr. Landrum made a speech about it in his church. "It is your school," he told the congregation. "You come down and see and help us." He takes an eager, youthful pride in every improvement on the school building or grounds. "We've got a good school," he tells visitors proudly, "a very good school."

We are leaving Breathitt County now. Tim Smith, our nine-year-old host, came with us to the door. The mid-afternoon sun hit us brightly.

"It's late," I said. "You'll be going home soon, too. How far do you have to go, Tim?"

"Six miles," Tim replied.

"Walk all the way?" I asked.

"What I don't go in a boat," he said.

"A boat?" I asked.

"We have to cross two creeks and there ain't—aren't—no bridges," Tim said. Then in a sudden spurt of words, "My brother—he goes to Breathitt High—and he's been in the Army—he says he's going to learn to build bridges for Breathitt County."

"That's fine, mighty fine," I said. "All these miles and miles of creeks and rivers need some bridging mighty bad. What are you going to do for Breathitt County when you grow up, Tim?"

"I don't rightly know," Tim said, "but I'm thinking and a-planning."

# What Do Children Think About?

Virginia Stout, teacher of six-year-olds in the De Witt S. Morgan School, Indianapolis, Indiana, listened to the informal conversations of her pupils, wrote them down just as they were given and read them at the May 1946 meeting of the Association for Childhood Education. She shares them here with a larger audience.

THE WORLD IS A BIG ROUND BALL.  
It has to move every twenty-four hours.  
You can't feel it move.  
The world is magic!  
It is big!  
What makes the world is—God.  
God made everything—even us!  
But He made a plan first.

Sky, clouds, rain, sun, trees and flowers.  
Woods and rivers, birds and nests.  
And all kinds of little baby things.  
Airplanes and fire engines and stores.  
And our own selves—it would just be  
an empty world  
If we weren't here to live in it  
and enjoy it.  
Houses, too! We need houses to live in  
with each other.  
Just plain *houses* belong to other people.  
But a *home*, well, that's where *you* live  
With your daddy and mother.  
Food is important, too.  
Because people would starve  
if they didn't have food.  
Like the people in China and Europe.  
And that's too bad!

We have nights, so the world  
will be comfortable.  
All the lights are turned out  
so people can rest for tomorrow.  
Night is a time to dream.  
It is a restful time.  
The stars and the moon come out.  
God planned it that way  
So the world would still be pretty.  
The sun can rest then, too.  
Pink and blue dawn in the morning  
is so beautiful.  
The sun comes up in the sky very slowly.  
It *can't* just pop up! God moves slowly.

There is something interesting  
about the sun and the moon  
And the whole sky. They are very, very old.  
You can read about them in the Bible.  
These are the important things in the world.

Of course, our own selves  
make it a nice place.  
We wish the bad people in the world  
were good.  
So the world would be pleasant all the time.  
I think God *planned* it that way, don't you?

I like nice, kind people.  
I like people who smile at me  
with their eyes.  
I like soft voices, too.  
I like people who make surprises for me.  
My mother thinks, sometimes, I have  
too many things,  
But she likes to do things for me  
when I am good.  
'Specially, you know, I like my mother  
and daddy.  
When I first was born  
I drank my mother's milk.  
'Way back, when I was a baby,  
I didn't know much.  
My mother and father protected me then.  
They still do, sometimes,  
but they are teaching me  
To protect myself, now.

I LIKE HAPPY, JOLLY PEOPLE.  
Santa Claus is jolly. Some people  
say he is a spirit  
And not real, but *I* think he is real.  
I like people to talk things over with me.  
I like to understand about things.  
I like people who are happy. The ones that  
aren't cross.  
The ones that laugh most of the time.





The world is magic!

Photograph by Louise Gross

I MET A MAN ONCE I DIDN'T LIKE.  
He had a mean disposition.  
When he was little, I 'spect  
He didn't learn to listen to his mother.  
He didn't learn to obey the rules.  
I was *sorry* for him, but *I didn't like him!*

Friends are nice to have,  
But *you* have to learn  
To *be* friends, too!  
You have to share, you have to get along.  
You have to learn to do the things  
Other people want to do, some of the time.  
Sometimes you have to sit alone,  
If you can't remember these things,  
And that isn't fun.  
You have to *think* about being good.  
Sometimes you have to think a long time.  
If you get angry with people  
That's just plain not using your head.  
We can always get along without angry people.  
Old people can be friends with you, too.  
I know a boy sixteen  
and he is a *good* friend to me.

I think tricks are funny. Jokes are, too.  
One day we were washing the turtle bowl.  
The turtle fell out in my pocket.

That was funny.  
Babies are funny, too, but of course  
they don't mean to be.  
Silly things are funny, sometimes,  
but not always.  
(I like to be silly sometimes!)

When someone dies it is sad  
Because you have loved them all your life,  
and you won't see them any more.  
I felt sad when my dog was killed  
by a careless driver.  
We loved each other. I was sad  
when my little kitten died.  
We feel sorry about the war.  
That made people unhappy.  
The train crash made me feel sorry.  
Most of the time we don't think  
about sad things.  
But when sad things happen you just try  
To keep happy thoughts in your mind.

I AM GLAD I LIVE IN THIS WORLD.  
It has 'most everything in it I like.  
I am glad I am an American.  
I am glad I got borned, so I could  
Get acquainted with my parents.

## Why Nursery Schools?

Attention to the needs of the child below six and those of his family as well necessitates appraisal of the ways of meeting those needs. Mrs. Fowler, instructor in child development and teacher in the nursery school, University of Texas, Austin, discusses the contributions of the nursery school as a laboratory for learning, for finding companions and controls and for pre- and in-service parenthood.

**T**HE SHIPS HAVE BEEN BUILT AND that part of the war is over but the mother's need for nursery school has not passed. She is doing no less important work though in many cases she is in the home all day, maintaining a place in which she and her family can live satisfactorily. Much of the responsibility for the tone and quality of family living is here.

The mother is also responsible for the bearing and most of the rearing of the children, for the cooking, the cleaning and the marketing. In addition to these chores, if there is a baby, she has a constant round of diapers to wash and often formulae to make. She needs to be at peace with herself and the world if she is to meet, with the same integrated interest she had at breakfast, the children's tired and sometimes fretful need at night. Her job is not a simple nor an easy one.

While much of this life—and it is life—is deeply satisfying and important to a woman, it is no less important to a nation. One cannot look honestly at the responsibilities of a mother without realizing that she along with the children needs the nursery school. Establishment of nursery schools adequate in quality and number, speaks more understanding and appreciation of mothers and their job than all of the

glorified words in honor and praise of motherhood.

### *The Nursery School—A Laboratory for Learning*

For the child, the nursery school serves as a kind of special laboratory for collecting and assembling data about things and about people. He doesn't want to be told how things work. Spoken language is comparatively new to him, and has meaning only in so far as he has firsthand experience with which to interpret it.

His drive is toward getting that experience. He is finding out that blocks are heavy or light, that they are smooth or rough, that they will fall when piled beyond a certain point of balance. He discovers that by pulling a rope tied to a wagon he can move the wagon. He learns that a wagon tied on behind his tricycle moves with the tricycle. He looks back as he pedals along to see that it is really true. A happy, in-command-of-the-situation expression lingers on his face as he pushes on, listening to the wagon rolling along behind him.

For the young child this is full living. It is his by right of discovery. Of course he does many of these things at home but even the same experiences are different in different places. Any scientist knows that much data is needed in

order to arrive at dependable conclusions. Young children are scientific in their approach to life. They are realists. They haven't decided beforehand what the answer is going to be. They accept what they find and they are inclined to do a rather thorough job of investigating. Nursery school increases these finding-out opportunities.

By the time the child is about three, he seems to have an insatiable drive to find out. He generally has made a rather thorough investigation of the things in the home—from the tiniest pin on the floor to the package on the top shelf of the closet. He moves from one thing to another seeing, feeling, experimenting. Sometimes he lingers long and sometimes he moves on to something else after a brief handling of the object. But he returns to it day after day. His findings are well checked and enlarged upon. He is doing most of his learning in this area through his senses. He is not contriving to make trouble for adults. He is only making a desperate effort to do what nature is demanding of him—find out about the world he has so recently come into.

His frustrations are hard to take even in the best situations. Often they are connected with or applied by people. So along with things he must learn about people, especially adults, since they seem to control the world he inhabits. He does this with acute alertness. There are times when he so watches the reactions of an adult that not a flick of an eyelash escapes him, not the slightest suggestion of antagonism nor change of mind. He is perhaps more aware of the adult's state of feeling than is the adult himself. It doesn't take him long to show more understanding of the adult in certain situations than the adult shows of him. If in doubt about it,

watch him bring a parent back to his bedside at night when he has decided he wants neither sleep nor aloneness.

Things and people are only two of the subjects which are pressing in on the child during these early years. He is giving much time and attention to language and to learning about space, light, darkness, time, gravity and other fundamentals. At the same time that he is involved in unfolding these mysteries, nature is demanding that his growing body be coordinated and balanced. This demand requires frequent and strenuous use of his large and small muscles. No wonder he is eagerly busy every moment of the day.

One day a two-and-a-half-year-old picked up a stick in the nursery school yard. He was about to strike another child when the teacher diverted the stick. Surprised, he looked at her. He understood. She didn't need to say anything. He spoke slowly and thoughtfully, gently trying out his ideas as he spoke. "Can I hit the ground?" "Can I hit myself?" One could see his effort to encompass and organize ideas. Before he gets them established, he will be in the process of learning when the hitting of a person is acceptable and when it is not. The school society does accept it now and then, as does the larger society.

So the child is getting more than facts. He is also getting a way of life. He learns that he has rights but that other people also have rights. He learns, too, that the world has order and constancy. There is so much that is changing that a framework of reasonable expectation is important. The teacher establishes this framework not by listing rules but by helping the child to accept and develop a few simple standards consistent with those in adult society.



### ***A Laboratory for Finding Companions and Controls***

The child has certain freedoms; he also has certain responsibilities accompanying those freedoms. He probably has freedom in the use of shelves of blocks. He also has certain responsibilities for the care of those blocks when he is through using them. When he has finished he puts them away and they will be there tomorrow morning. He knows and controls that situation. He is master of it. So his world takes shape and he finds his place in it. Along with its function as a laboratory for learning the nursery school inducts the child into citizenship in our society.

One day Dickie brought a helmet which his daddy in service had given him. Dickie was four. He put it on and said boastfully, "I could butt the whole house down with this big old brass helmet."

As a matter of fact, except for the noise this age child makes in these bold announcements of his own newly discovered power, he is still comparatively mild. However, there is no mildness in the eagerness with which he goes out to discover life. It is well for the strutting power which is so often a part of four-year-oldness to have company and competition. Otherwise it might overdo itself in ego expansiveness. Toward five or six he begins to be able to say to another child, with real appreciation, "That's a good boat you made!"

One day in the early part of the nursery school year three children were having great fun with gun play on a boat they had built of large blocks. Three other boys wanted to join the play. One asked uncertainly if he could "play" with them and was promptly turned down. Another tried to push his way on and was quickly rebuffed.

The third stood at a distance watching the gun play intently. He became so interested that he joined the shooting, keeping his distance. In a short while he naturally and easily joined the play on the boat. In a few days this child's face was glowing and his personality expanding with group acceptance and his own feeling of belonging.

Children do for themselves in their own society what an adult cannot do for them. They learn to live in a contemporary world. Each child learns it in his own way and at his own speed. Adults can alter the situation and influence the balance of his successes and failures and thus affect his learning. But the child makes his own place in his contemporary world, even as you and I. It is well to have this opportunity in the early formative years when that world can be altered somewhat to meet developmental needs.

There are equipment and materials at nursery school which a home would find it hard to duplicate. But perhaps even more important are the companions who stimulate and enhance the child's use of things. We have only to watch him at play with children his own age to know that they satisfy a deep need. There are times when a child has needs which even the wisest parents and best homes cannot satisfy.

Edward was four years old. He had been well prepared for a new baby that was coming into the family. One morning at nursery school he announced with a radiant face that he had a baby sister. The several children whom he told were flatly unimpressed.

Soon Edward put the doll in the carriage and began pushing it around the room. Robert who often built boats with Edward joined him but began run-

ning with the carriage. Evidently he wanted physical activity.

Edward took the doll out of the carriage and went into the playhouse alone. Anne joined him, carefully carrying her doll wrapped in a blanket. She took over the housekeeping while Edward unwrapped, wrapped, rode and walked Anne's doll. This situation gave Edward not only an opportunity to express and organize feeling but an opportunity for a kind of sharing possible only on the contemporary level. Generally at nursery school one can find a person with similar interest when one needs him.

For the nursery school child his parents are still the most important people in the world and his home is the hub of the universe. But even a home and parents have limitations. As life gets more complex the individual needs more ways of expressing and organizing his reactions to it and more contacts with people who are having those same experiences. The good nursery school meets these needs of the child.

The child has a right to an opportunity to develop a strong well-coordinated body, a personality structure which is sound and vigorous, plenty of intellectual curiosity, some knowledge of how to live with contemporaries in a group and good follow-through work habits. With these assets life can be lived more successfully and happily.

### *A Laboratory for Pre- and In-service Parenthood*

Nursery schools are sometimes planned to take care of other needs along with those of the young child. In some states they are used by the high school to give both the girls and the boys an opportunity to know children better. Each of these high school students is a potential parent of the next generation and more likely to need a knowledge of children than of algebra.

It is now generally accepted that a teacher who lives with and largely determines the school situation for a child from three to eight hours a day needs to know children. But the parents who live with children most of the time—and for years of their lives—too often have had little or no opportunity to learn how children react to and are shaped by the situations they live in. The good nursery school offers this opportunity.

Since education is primarily concerned with learning and since the rate and likely the intensity of learning for the individual do not again approach that of these early years, there is reason to question whether any educational system can afford to disregard its preschool children. There is also reason to question whether any home should dismiss, without careful consideration, the possible need of the child for the nursery school experience.

## The Pebble

By LEAH AIN GLOBE

I threw a pebble  
Into a brook  
The water gulped  
The surface shook  
Into a ringlet  
That quivered to rings

That rippled to wider  
Circlings  
Thinner, vaguer  
Farther, lost . . .  
Like the pebble  
I had tossed.

## The Child's Need to Anticipate

"Planning a child's day in such a way that he is able to anticipate what is going to happen and is permitted to take active part in the happenings is an essential initiation into democratic living," says Mrs. Peller, lecturer in child psychology, College of the City of New York. Knowing the child's need to anticipate what is going to happen helps parents and teachers contribute to his greater total security.

**W**E CAN CLASSIFY CHILDREN'S NEEDS according to their importance. The physiological needs and the need for affection and belonging will rank first in this scale.

However, we can look at the young child's needs also from a more practical angle, asking which are the areas where the greatest discrepancy exists between the child's needs and the provisions to satisfy them. The writer would not hesitate to assign the first place on this scale to the child's need to anticipate events in his daily life.

Why is this need given so little consideration?

There is more than one reason. The young child appears so completely absorbed in the "now" that he hardly seems able to give much thought to the future, even the immediate future. We all remember incidents in which a young child acted without the most elementary foresight and got into trouble because he just plunged ahead. Do we remember these incidents because they are so frequent in the child's life or because they have such unpredictable and sometimes highly amusing outcomes and because the child's behavior is so different from that of adults in a comparable situation?

No statistics exist on this issue. But when we observe a three- or even a two-year-old in nursery school, we will

see how often he does show foresight, how frequently he applies the "stop-look-and-listen" rule before acting.

In most situations a young child cannot provide or plan for himself. He has to accept "mother (or teacher) knows best" and to hand over things to her superior intelligence. He would be literally and physically lost without our care for him, yet we cannot abrogate his rights to observe, to size up a situation and to use his judgment, limited as it is.

Most children are discouraged many times a day from using their intelligence in everyday happenings. The staple phrases—"Go back to your toys; don't ask questions; you cannot understand this now; when you grow up I'll tell you"—may be largely unavoidable while he is among adults fully occupied by their work and interests and speeding through their day. But it is the task of the nursery school to plan his activities and his day in such a way that he can understand what is going on and can anticipate the next step. His observations are interrupted by sudden fluctuations in interest, his judgment is subject to many errors and yet he not only should be permitted but encouraged to use it in everyday situations.

The adult will carry a young child or put him in his baby carriage when



he has to go to a distant place but he will not immobilize the child's legs during the rest of the day. Though his legs are too weak to carry him far, he has to use them in order to strengthen them.

The same is true for his intelligence. All the essential planning must be done by the adult. Yet within this framework he too should understand what is going on and what to expect. The right to observe and to anticipate what comes next through observations of his own, not only through the words of the adults, is his birthright; he cannot abdicate it.

The intellectual processes of observing, linking present with past experiences, anticipating and reflecting are going on in the smallest child, even at a time when his vocabulary for communicating his thoughts is limited.

Temper tantrums are usually taken as expressions of childish whims. The adult says, "He wants to have the moon and cries because he does not get it." Some outbursts of temper have a different etiology. The child observes, reasons, and is taken by surprise when something different than the expected thing happens. That he is unable to put into words what he visualizes so clearly only increases his fury.

Two-year-old Peggy, who had been quite sick, asked for eggs one morning. The mother hesitated but was glad for this sign of increasing appetite. When she brought the egg the child pushed the cup back and soon asked for eggs again. The father thought she might have seen Easter eggs in a store window, but when he brought her some candy eggs Peggy threw the bag on the floor and flew into a temper tantrum. Through her tears her request for eggs continued.

Later the riddle was solved. A young uncle had sat at her bedside the preceding day and had drawn eggs in bright colors for her. Peggy longed to see these drawings.

Her outburst of temper was caused by the painful discrepancy between what she visualized and what she was able to communicate. It was not due to her unreasonableness. While this clash was unavoidable there are others which can be averted if we work toward a better understanding of children's reasoning.

### *The Importance of a Stable Sequence*

The ability to take clues from the environment and to anticipate comes long before nursery school age. A procedure that may cause resistance or fear will be followed smoothly and even with joy if the child is given time to adjust to it.

The bath is the big daily event in the infant's life. A mother told a psychologist that her boy of ten months was always scared when she lowered him into his bath, arching his back and throwing up his arms. She was told to follow the same sequence every day when preparing the bath and undressing the child, to play a little with him when she was ready for the bath and to splash the water with her hand before immersing him. Within three days she reported that the infant's fear was gone and he had come to like his bath. He was now able to anticipate the next step.

A three-year-old girl flew into a temper tantrum every day when her mother lifted her out of the buggy after her ride. In order to satisfy the child the mother prolonged the walk but still Elsie cried and was upset when they stopped in front of their door. Finally the mother tried slowing up several blocks from the house, pointing to their house and describing how the walk would soon be finished: Elsie would come out of the carriage, the teddy bear would come out and so would the pillow. They would walk upstairs together and there would be juice on the table. The temper tantrums stopped promptly.

The great value of a stable sequence of daily events in nursery school—the so-called routines—lies in the fact that the daily repetition soon enables the child to anticipate what comes next and thus to go actively with us. It is well known that time as such is meaningless to the child. Very slowly he comes to an evaluation of time.

In nursery school a friend of the family asked a four-and-a-half-year-old when his daddy had left for Washington. Was it today or had he taken the planned trip a week ago? The child looked puzzled. He tried to think it out but was unable to answer. Actually his father had left at about seven o'clock that morning. The child was fully awake and the question was asked before noon.

Sequences, however, are quickly remembered. When A is finished the child embarks on B because yesterday B followed A and did so the day before. When there is no stable sequence he has to be told at every turn what to do and where to go. He is aware that the adult knows everything and directs everything while he is helpless. Once the sequence is well established some child will start with B even before the teacher has given the signal for it and be quite proud of himself. Every time he successfully anticipates the next thing he gains in self-confidence and confirms his experience that it pays to watch out.

Every time he is told what to do and given no time to make the order his own he has the disappointment of knowing that there is no way of figuring out why things happen. We know that children's questions should not be rebuffed harshly, yet any abrupt order which plunges into the child's day and gives him no time to adjust to it discourages his active, observant mind just as much.

In the interest of mental hygiene a nursery school should from time to time analyze its program to see whether there are any points where the child's need to anticipate could be given a fuller scope.

In the Center for Research in Child Development at Harvard, children come for one full day every semester and on this day all the measurements

and tests of the research program are carried out. It is a strenuous day for a child and he needs a successful lunch and a real nap in order to hold out for the needed hours. If a child refuses to eat or to rest because everything is too new and too unexpected, then the observations carried out in the afternoon are valueless.

It was found that a small lunch served in the midmorning and followed by a short period where the children played nap and lay down on their cots while the teacher recounted to them the rest of the day's program got them acquainted with lunch and nap in a group. Their rest and their food intake at midmorning is of little relevance—they are neither hungry nor tired—but it offers a chance to come to know the procedure. At noontime the barrier of the unknown has been overcome. The Research Center's report states that the midmorning lunch and play nap take fifteen minutes but they pay dividends in terms of ease, especially in the case of young or apprehensive children.

This playful anticipation of a real situation is an excellent device and could be used—*mutatis mutandis*—wherever the young child is baffled and balks at a situation not bearing the earmarks of familiarity. In many nursery schools, when a new dish is served the children are encouraged to taste it. At the same meal they are given familiar food to satisfy their hunger. After they have tried out the new dish a couple of times most children are ready to enjoy it.

The young child resembles in many of his actions a man walking on ice of unknown thickness. He puts a leg forward, then shifts his weight back to the other foot, then leans forward

again and finally transfers his full weight onto the leg that took the step.

### *The Need to Repeat and to Warn*

Closely related to the child's need to anticipate a thing before it happens is his need to repeat it afterward. A large amount of children's spontaneous play is motivated by this urge. They want to do actively what happened to them when they were passive and had no choice. They enact what they went through, re-live it and make it their own. When it happens again there is less need for apprehension. Early students of child behavior commented on the fact that children are supposed to play for their enjoyment, yet they weave into their play scenes which doubtless were painful, like a visit to the dentist. The child dramatizes an experience in order to make it his own, to digest it. Repetition lessens the shock of surprise, of pain or of deprivation.

The re-living of an experience which was upsetting is not limited to children. We adults do the same thing with thought and language as our media. These two avenues are largely barred to the child. In order to bring the situation back, he must "recall" it with his muscles. He must act. Therefore it is so important not to interfere with children's free play and to observe carefully the content of their play. There is no better way of learning their concerns. The adult is more fortunate than the child. Nobody can prevent him from rehashing his past experiences. Thoughts are beyond external control. But the young child whose play is curtailed or in whose play a well-meaning yet sentimental adult mingles is handicapped in acting basically for his emotional and intellectual development.

The child has to anticipate events in his own way; our technique may be of little avail.

A teacher had often to cross a busy street with her pupils. She explained to them more than once how to behave, called on the children to repeat her words, and warned that a child would be excluded from the next trip if he failed to do as she directed. The misbehavior—tearing ahead, running wildly when a car was seen in the distance, and losing one's buddy—persisted.

Finally the teacher drew chalk lines on the floor indicating the sidewalks and the thoroughfare. One child was the policeman and another one the teacher. They dramatized the street-crossing. The children entered wholeheartedly into the new game and its carry-over value for the actual situation in the street soon became evident. This is an impressive example of how the adult's words may fail to reach children, while their own acting has the desired effect.

Telling a four-year-old what he is expected to do a few days hence is of little use. He will forget and be surprised when called to task for not doing it. In the nursery school the daily living should be planned in such a way that children can help a good deal, but they should not be assigned weekly duties. A household chore started on Monday with great enthusiasm is likely to become a burden before the week is over. Children six and seven years old, and sometimes five, will spontaneously express the desire to plan duties for a whole week.

Modern educators have discarded the quest for "prompt obedience." At any time of his waking day a child is engaged in some activity or in thoughts of some continuity, even if he appears to be just dillydallying or daydreaming. If we call him we should give him a few instants to disengage himself from what he is doing. In nursery school the teacher will say, "In five minutes we'll put our toys away and we'll get



dressed." This reminder allows the child to carry through what he is doing, to translate his current thoughts into action. If he has to interrupt the very minute he is called, he has no time to adjust to the teacher's request.

Even interruptions preceded by a fair warning should be kept at a minimum in nursery school. They are a necessary evil in the group care of young children. By careful planning their number can be reduced. An interruption that was necessary in the fall may become avoidable as the year proceeds. For instance, young children had formerly to be interrupted in their play to be reminded to go to the toilet, while a few months later they can carry this responsibility.

### ***Fears and Apprehensions***

The child's need to anticipate contributes to the emerging of rites. A fairly typical example of a rite developed in the nursery school is given by Wagoner. It refers to a child saying goodbye to his mother. After kissing her he would dash down the hall and out upon the playground for a final wave of goodbye. This was done every morning. Interruption of this procedure by a stormy day, which meant indoor school, precipitated a tantrum.

This child found the daily separation from his mother hard. He had instituted a ritual following the pattern, "A small sample first." Leaving his mother for a couple of minutes and finding her again after both had gone off in different directions helped him to stand successfully a separation of several hours. Such techniques ease children's adjustments to new situations or to deprivations which are hard when they come all in one lump. To Wagoner's excellent description we would

like to add—it might have been worth while to continue this ceremony even on a stormy or rainy morning. According to the description, the child had just come in, was still wearing his outdoor apparel and could run out.

Betty (four and a half) refused to enter the wading pool. She seemed scared and remained unaffected by the other children's delight in splashing and in water play. When the teacher wanted to help her undress she refused. So the teacher worked by indirection. She provided Betty with a basin and two small mugs and filled the basin at the pool while Betty watched from a safe distance. Betty played with this equipment on the lawn, watching the other children from time to time. After several days the basin was handed to her empty. She could fill it herself at the pool if she wished. This she did and the very next day she took off her own clothing and waded into the pool with the other children.

In his studies on children's fears, Jersild offers a number of techniques for overcoming them. For instance, the child who is afraid of the vacuum cleaner is encouraged to watch from a safe distance, to look at and touch the cleaner when not in action. He sees the adult taking the apparatus apart and putting it together again. He is shown how to turn it on and off, thus producing the weird noise. The common denominator of all these techniques is that they enable the child to approach the new thing gradually. By taking an intermediary step he has a better vantage point for understanding the whole thing.

The adult who wants to help the child should encourage and proffer those intermediary steps but not press the issue. In overcoming apprehension children proceed at highly different rates.

The young child's delight in the repetition of an already well-known story, a familiar song, rhyme or game is so

obvious that we find it mentioned even before the science of child psychology came into existence. The charm of a familiar situation is partly due to our ability to anticipate the next step. Knowing so well what comes next the child has the feeling of mastery. For once the adult is doing something for which the child possesses the perfect blueprint.

Love of familiar patterns is not restricted to children. When we listen to a well-known piece of music we would be very upset if the performer should make any changes, even if they are in keeping with the laws of harmony. We know how the melody should proceed. The audience would grow as restless as a group of children if an orchestra should change a phrase in a Beethoven symphony. The same is true for stage plays. The audience may fear the tragic outcome, yet the actor has no right to meddle with it. Adults have the same possessive love of well-known patterns, only they have carried it into other areas.

When children undergo decisive ex-

periences, their need to anticipate looms very large. Jackson describes children's reactions to tonsillectomies and other operations. Some of the children who had been correctly informed before they came to the hospital caused a good deal of trouble for the parents and nurses before the operation. As it is so easy to misinform a child about a pending operation it seemed that the children had been exposed to anxiety and to scenes which were unnecessary. Another group of children was spared those antecedents when taken to the hospital unprepared and partly misinformed. But after the operation the picture was well-nigh reversed. The children who had known about the operation beforehand slipped back easily into their everyday life. In the group which had been taken to the hospital by trickery several children showed disturbances.

Planning a child's day in such a way that he is able to anticipate what is going to happen and is permitted to take active part in the happenings is an essential initiation into democratic living.

## The Snow Man

By FRANCES FROST

We made a snow man in our yard,  
Jolly and round and fat.  
We gave him Father's pipe to smoke  
And Father's battered hat.  
We tied a red scarf round his neck,  
And in his buttonhole

We stuck a holly spray. He had  
Black buttons made of coal,  
He had black eyes, a turned-up nose,  
A wide and cheerful grin,—  
And there he stood in our front yard  
Inviting company in!

Reprinted from *The Packet*, Volume I, No. 3, October 1946  
By permission of D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, Mass.

## Books FOR TEACHERS . . .

EDUCATING AMERICA'S CHILDREN. By Fay Adams. New York: The Ronald Press Company. Pp. 490. \$3.75.

Miss Adams' book deals with education for American life by discussing what the schools of America should be doing for children. From the standpoint of society, good citizenship is no longer one of the objectives of the elementary school curriculum; it is the *major* objective to which all other objectives must contribute.

The purposes of education will be achieved only as we understand and envision the thorough integration of the child in his environment. The author gives information to aid teachers and administrators in understanding the fundamentals of the American way. Desirable social attitudes and ideals must be based on an intelligent foundation of knowledge.

With the basic statement of pupil needs and a discussion of the kind of teachers we need presented in Part I, the writer has ably paved the way for the presentation of important and helpful guidelines for the elementary teacher, curriculum worker or the administrator to achieve a unitary personal-social concept of the child which squares with reality. Curriculum patterns require planning and better criteria than mere interest.

Guidelines for achieving democracy through practice and pupil guidance involving three environments—the home, the school, and the community—with basic needs of security, recognition, belonging and conformity, preeminence or excellence, and consistency form important aspects of the total pattern of pupil adjustment and are basic considerations of Part II.

Science and social living which contribute so much to adjustment to the social and natural environment rightfully follow the important chapter on mental and physical health in Part III. Safeguarding and improving the mental and physical health of children is one of the teacher's most important responsibilities.

Part IV deals with skills as aids to living and learning. In the limited space allotted, the writer has been discriminating in choosing the best from her own observation and work and from the literature in the field. Each chapter has excellent references and summaries.

In the concluding chapters of Part V—"Life's Overtones: Enriched Living through the Fine Arts"—Miss Adams discusses art, music and dramatics. The change in emphasis from the exhibitional to the educational has given new life to the arts so that they are becoming a vital means of expression for the many rather than for the talented few.

This book is worthy of much consideration by all who are sincerely interested in understanding the fundamentals and methods of the American way, for if teachers are intelligently informed, they should all be better able to fulfill their places as standard bearers of democracy in the total educational picture.—*Maurine Bloomster, Assistant Professor and Training Teacher, Northern Illinois State Teachers College, DeKalb, Illinois.*

FOUNDATIONS OF READING INSTRUCTION. By Emmett Albert Betts. New York: American Book Company. Pp. 757. \$4.50.

*Foundations of Reading Instruction* is an exceptionally comprehensive, detailed discussion, not only of the teaching of reading but also of its interrelationship to the total curriculum. Special emphasis is given to the place of reading in language development, the magnitude of teaching reading and its many ramifications.

Throughout the book, stress is laid on differentiated teaching. The author refers frequently and with emotion to the undesirability of regimented teaching and points out the progressive steps needed to achieve informal teaching. A more emphatic caution that informal teaching is not incidental teaching would have strengthened these appeals.

Mr. Betts makes a plea for preventing reading problems. As one means he proposes the consideration of reading readiness, not only at the initial stage but also at each level thereafter. He advocates considering the whole child. However, for discussion purposes, he divides the problem into its many factors. Emphasis is rightly placed on the interrelation of these factors.

The discussion proceeds from initial reading experiences through directed reading activities



to a detailed consideration of developing basic reading abilities. Vocabulary development includes pronunciation and meaning. Various means of developing these aspects of vocabulary are considered in relation to the whole program.

His final chapter is a realistic portrayal of different levels of professional competence in language instruction. The eleven levels range from "complete regimentation" to teaching the child, not the subject. Any school or teacher can readily determine the present level of teaching and see clearly what can be done to foster improvement. A glossary of terms and lists of texts and publishers in the appendix should prove helpful to all teachers.

This book will be found most valuable to the young teacher who will probably find most profitable the reiteration of ideas and overworded explanations. The many examples of good and poor teaching illustrate practical application of principles but it seems doubtful if a book this large can be studied adequately in the time usually devoted to educating teachers of reading.

One strong point is the author's emphasis on finding the student's level and adapting instruction to fit it. The systematic informal inventories provide helpful guides in this area. The emphasis on total language development and on reading as a language skill rather than a subject creates a proper setting. In short, the author has stressed the need for teaching not only *how* and *why* but also *when* to read and *where* the reader may find material to satisfy his personal quests and interests.—*Helen M. Robinson, Director, University of Chicago Reading Clinics.*

**TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.** By *Edgar Bruce Wesley and Mary A. Adams.* Boston: D. C. Heath and Company. Pp. 362. \$2.75.

Professional books pertaining to teaching usually present abstract points of view about educational philosophy, curriculum procedures, and teaching methods. In this book the authors deal with practical aspects of curriculum and teaching, through the medium of the social studies, and present a valuable over-all view of recent developments in elementary education.

Some of the curriculum trends implied may be described as follows: (a) Elementary teachers have become curriculum makers which means they have become better students of the content which goes into the curriculum. (b)

Teachers have developed a sense of responsibility toward pupils which involves a desire to adjust the curriculum to the child. (c) Curriculum making has been decentralized. (d) Experiences or activities furnish the raw materials for learning. These experiences must be organized and evaluated for proper learning to take place.

Modern phases of teaching reflected in the book may be illustrated by the following statements:

Pupil-teacher relationship has improved since teachers have begun to study children.

The characteristics of a good teacher are the same as those for persons who succeed in any other line of work.

The modern elementary classroom should be a living democracy.

Educational objectives should be stated in terms of behavior characteristics and should be the result of pupils and teachers agreeing upon a set of objectives.

Pupils should have a vital part in determining ways in which school experiences are to be evaluated. The unit plan of teaching has surpassed the subject approach. The textbook is a supplement, a basis for a common understanding, a point of departure, but it does not dominate or determine the content or procedure of the course.

The trend with workbooks is to use them individually rather than by classes. The existence of book centers in classrooms need not prevent the development of a school library.

Pupils who have studied with the aid of audio visual materials remember more of the facts presented and remember them longer. The teacher who cannot appreciate the community in which her school is located is overlooking a source of living power in vitalizing teaching. Every teacher is a teacher of reading.

The reader might wish for a detailed plan for a typical teaching unit with objectives, understandings and various other outcomes and activities suggested, also some indications of ways of evaluating the unit of work. The inclusion of the more recent notable studies in child growth and development and in evaluation of instruction would tend to give the reader more confidence in the validity of points of view expressed in these two important areas.

The book should be in the library of every elementary school and should furnish the basis for study as faculty members seek cooperatively to improve instruction within their building. It may be used effectively also as a source of common understanding, as a school system seeks to raise the level of teaching on a citywide basis. The authors are to be congratulated upon their making available for elementary school teachers a book which may be used effectively on campuses and in school systems for the improvement of teacher education.—*Gilbert S. Willey, Pueblo Public Schools, Pueblo, Colorado.*

## Books FOR CHILDREN . . .

**THIS IS THE MOON.** By Marion B. Cotbren. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. Pp. 85. \$2.

In simple language this book answers many questions about the moon, relates the moon myths from many lands and describes a possible rocket trip to the moon. Children are encouraged to visit one of the five great planetariums in the United States.

Throughout the book, facts, fiction, and poetry are nicely balanced. Many a boy or girl after reading this book will look forward to doing his share in research in radar and atomic energy as he grows up. A thrilling book for the nine- to twelve-year-olds.

**THE CITY OF ONCE UPON A TIME.** By Gilchrist Waring. Illustrated by Elmo Jones. Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Press. Unpaged. \$2.50.

This is a very simple, pleasant story of Williamsburg, Virginia, which even the eight-year-olds will enjoy. It begins with the founding of Jamestown, its burning and the moving of the capital to Williamsburg. It tells of the building of the Governor's Palace, Bruton Parish, the House of Burgesses, and other lovely homes. It traces the history of our country from earliest times until George Washington was made President. Then for one hundred fifty years this lovely sleepy town waited almost unnoticed until John D. Rockefeller, Jr., made its restoration possible.

**THE COW IN THE KITCHEN.** By Jane and Arthur Flory. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company. Unpaged. \$1.

A discontented wife who complained of the house being too small is cured by having the animals brought in. When the farmer lets them all out contentment reigns again. The colorful Pennsylvania Dutch illustrations add much to the charm of this old tale.

**WHEN IT RAINED CATS AND DOGS.** By Nancy Byrd Turner. Illustrated by Tibor Gergely. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. Unpaged. \$1.

What fun youngsters four to six will have in saying this rhyme over and over. The pictures

accompanying the text are so much a part of it that one fairly sees the rhythm and both are irresistible. Children will learn the names of various kinds of cats and dogs just by repeating the rhymes and looking at the pictures. A "must" book for the youngest.

**THE RUNAWAY SOLDIER.** Retold by Fruma Gottschalk. Illustrated by Simon Lissim. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Pp. 161. \$2.50.

Sixteen tales from the folklore of Russia simply told, printed in large type with eight fullpage colored illustrations and numerous black and white drawings. As Fruma Gottschalk says in the charming foreword, "These stories are much like the folklore of other countries. They are about noblemen and kings who were both cruel and kind; about peasants who were poor, but courageous and wise. They are stories of the fox that is cunning and sly who always tries to teach other animals; of the wolf that is greedy and stupid."

This book will be helpful for those who enjoy having children dramatize informally.

**FAIRIES AND SUCHLIKE.** By Ivy O. Eastwick. Illustrated by Decie Merwin. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Pp. 63. \$1.50.

Teachers and children will enjoy reading these verses together. "The Lost Brother," "Sing a Song of Moonlight," "Piper's Son," "The Black-down Fellow" and "The First Snow" are some of my favorites from this collection. Each is so different yet intriguing. There is a freshness about these verses from England that should appeal to every child who believes in fairies.

**CAP'N DOW AND THE HOLE IN THE DOUGHNUT.** Story and pictures by Le Grand. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. Unpaged. \$1.

This story of how the hole in the doughnut was invented will be enjoyed by all ages. The pictures have much of the Le Grand manner so familiar to youngsters. After reading this tale one would not care to take a chance with doughnuts without holes in them 'ere he, too, might have a similar fate without the aid of Captain Jason Dow. Hilariously funny.

# News HERE AND THERE...

## New A.C.E. Branches

Tri-County Association for Childhood Education, Arkansas

John Muir Association for Childhood Education, California

Lenoir Rhyne College Association for Childhood Education, Hickory, North Carolina

Agricultural and Mechanical College Association for Childhood Education, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Pennsylvania State College Association for Childhood Education, State College

Cooke County Association for Childhood Education, Tennessee

Reinstated:

Robertson County Association for Childhood Education, Texas

## Eva Blaine Whitmore

Eva Blaine Whitmore, a pioneer in childhood education in Chicago, died at Evanston, Illinois, September 24, at the age of ninety-three. Born in Old Town, Maine, she did her first teaching in Missouri. She later moved to Chicago where she graduated from the kindergarten training department of Cook County Normal School. In 1886 she became superintendent of the Chicago Free Kindergarten Association and Kindergarten Collegiate Institute and remained in that position until the school closed in 1916.

Miss Whitmore was a life member of the International Kindergarten Union, now the Association for Childhood Education (International), and a former vice-president of the Kindergarten-Primary Department of the National Education Association. She was also a member of the Alumnae Club, which throughout the thirty years since the closing of the school has remained an active A.C.E. branch, meeting several times a year and identifying itself with worth-while projects.

## Ella Maude Flanagan

Ella Maude Flanagan who died at Council Bluffs, Iowa, August 2, had taught in the public schools of Mitchell, South Dakota, for twenty-five years. Since 1926 she had been principal of the Litchfield School and supervisor of primary grades in the Mitchell public schools. Miss Flanagan helped to organize the Association for Childhood Education in South Dakota and had been an active and interested member of the Association for many years.

## Roll of Honor

The name of John Kraus has been placed on the International Kindergarten Union Roll of Honor by the Kraus Alumnae Kindergarten Association of New York City.

## New A.C.E. Bulletin

The first membership service bulletin for 1947, *Using Audio Visual Materials With Children*, has been mailed to contributing and life members of the international Association for Childhood Education, and to officers of A.C.E. branches. The bulletin contains an introduction by Stephen M. Corey, and four sections titled: What Do We Mean by Audio Visual Materials?; Values and Hazards in Using Audio Visual Materials; Children's Experiences With Audio Visual Materials; An Audio Visual Program in Action.

The titles of Sections I and II are self-explanatory. Section III deals with children's experiences with audio visual materials through seeing experiences, through recordings, through radio and through films. Section IV presents notes on administration, finance, equipment and personnel, and on the supervision of an audio visual program and its integration into the school curriculum.

The thirty-six page bulletin may be purchased for fifty cents from the Association for Childhood Education, 1201 Sixteenth Street Northwest, Washington 6, D. C.

## Commission Urges Citizen Action for Children

Adoption of an eleven-point action program for 1947-48 led the list of important decisions reached by the National Commission on Children and Youth at its first annual meeting, held in Washington, D. C., December 9-11, 1946.

Successor to the National Commission on Children in Wartime, this new commission was formed in February 1946 "to give national leadership to efforts throughout the country to provide improved opportunities for children and youth." Its members include leaders of national organizations supporting programs for children and youth; representatives of professional groups, and state and local officials working in the fields of child health, child welfare,



education, recreation, and youth employment. Leonard W. Mayo, dean of the School of Applied Social Sciences, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, is chairman.

Reaffirming its position that it supports no specific piece of legislation, the commission phrased its action program in terms of basic objectives in the fields of social security, health, education, welfare, recreation, youth employment, state and community planning, youth participation, and international programs.

A proposal for a 1950 White House Conference on children and youth received the unanimous endorsement of the members, who voted that such a conference should be broadly representative and supported, so far as possible, from public funds.

Other measures adopted at this Commission meeting were:

Recommendations on increasing and extending the Commission's work with professional, civic and public groups; on strengthening its relations with state planning commissions, and with public and private agencies serving children and youth in the U. S. Territories.

Commendation of the President of the United States for his directive making possible the admission into this country of unaccompanied displaced children from Europe, and requesting the U. S. Children's Bureau to explore appropriate ways and means for increasing the number of children to be brought to the United States.

Creation of subcommittees of the Commission to work with various federal interagency committees on youth employment and education, migrant labor, health programs for school-age children, and with the President's Committee on Civil Rights.

Study of the reports growing out of the Attorney General's Conference for the Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency.

Copies of the action program adopted may be secured from Edith Rockwood, U. S. Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency, Washington 25, D. C.

#### ***International Educational Reconstruction***

On November 22-23, in Washington, D. C., two hundred twenty leaders of more than one hundred national and international organizations and agencies—educational, civic, religious, relief, labor, scientific—met to consider the plight of youth and the condition of education in the war-devastated countries. Delegates to this first National Conference on International Education Reconstruction returned home convinced that if peace is to be preserved the United States must do more than provide relief for the war-devastated countries in the form of food, clothing and medicines. They agreed that vast voluntary efforts are needed to aid the victims of war; to rebuild their schools and educational

systems, their libraries and museums, their universities and laboratories. They were convinced that the success of UNESCO, the educational arm of United Nations, depends in large measure upon restoring educational opportunity to all countries of the world—that rehabilitation of the mind is as important as rehabilitation of the body.

Participants, called together by the Commission for International Educational Reconstruction, included business men, labor leaders, farm executives, clergymen, college presidents, youth leaders, and diplomats. The Association for Childhood Education was represented by Mary E. Leeper, Frances Mayfarth, and Betty Klemmer.

The delegates all agreed that speedy action is needed to save the "lost generation" of the countries formerly occupied by the enemy. These youth have suffered hunger, cold, disease and the terrors of war and enemy occupation. Their education has been neglected or has been received largely under Axis direction. It seemed to the conferees that American humanitarianism and enlightened self-interest demand that these youth receive at least a minimum education.

The major work of the Conference was carried on by seven working committees organized to consider ways and means of carrying on the various types of needed educational assistance. In addition, seven spontaneously organized groups each held a single brief session to consider special problems in the major geographical areas and to discuss public relations. The committee chairmen reported their findings to the entire Conference at a final luncheon meeting.

Among the major recommendations of the Conference were:

The urgent importance of providing educational supplies and materials was recognized. It was recommended that these be allotted without discrimination as to race, creed, color or political belief. Aid should go to the former allied nations, to displaced children and, as soon as practicable, to former enemy nations.

Increased efforts by federal, industrial and private agencies to meet the utter lack in many areas of books and periodicals was recommended with the suggestion that such aid be provided for at least two years.

It was urged that special assistance be provided to teachers, including financial assistance to permit them to buy basic essentials since inflation has impoverished the teaching profession in most countries.

The Conference emphasized the importance of educational missions of all types. Foreign educational leaders should be brought to the United States for short periods of observation and study and the services of expert educational advisers should be offered to the war-devastated countries.

*(Continued on page 350)*

*Keeping Abreast of New Research in Reading  
and in Child Development*

**READING FOR INTEREST**

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*Two Primers—*

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RAIN AND SHINE, Revised (Waule, Witty, Falk)

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By Margaret Wise Brown

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## News Notes

(Continued from page 348)

The provision of thousands of fellowships and scholarships in American universities for advanced foreign students was urged.

### Special Service Honors Patty Smith Hill

Each year the memory of those who have been associated with Columbia University and have passed away during the preceding year are honored in a special service at St. Paul's Chapel in New York City. This year the name of Patty Smith Hill was one of those read and commemorated in prayers and worship.

### International Children's Emergency Fund

Under the sponsorship of United Nations, there was set up in January an International Children's Emergency Fund. The Fund was established by the General Assembly and its task will be to aid the millions of children and adolescents who suffered under the German and Japanese aggressions, to give additional help to those who have been aided by UNRRA, and to build stronger, healthier children all over the world.

The first contribution was \$550,000 presented by UNRRA Director General Fiorello H. LaGuardia. This has followed by \$60 presented by a citizen in behalf of her three children and grandchildren, and \$2.19 from the children in the elementary school at Carson, Washington. Another substantial contribution from the residual fund of UNRRA is expected, but contributions from individuals and organizations will be needed urgently. Preliminary plans call for the distribution of school lunches, milk, warm clothes and shoes. Other services will be added as the funds and opportunities increase.

The Fund's executive board has one member from each of twenty-five countries.

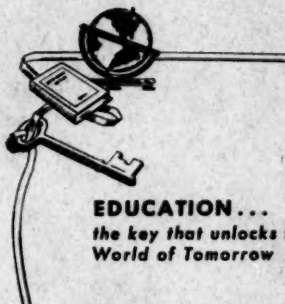
### Nursery School in Pretoria

Mrs. J. W. Martens of Johannesburg sends this news from South Africa:

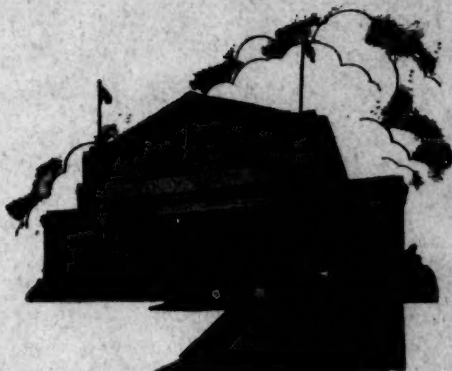
The first Indian nursery school in South Africa was opened at the request of the Aga Khan Community in

(Continued on page 352)





**EDUCATION...**  
*the key that unlocks the  
World of Tomorrow*



## **MINNESOTA SUMMER SESSION**

**INSTITUTE OF CHILD WELFARE**

**First Term**—The University of Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare, June 17 to July 25, two Workshops in Childhood Education and Child Development, one at the graduate level and one at the undergraduate level, with lectures, group conferences, independent study, and observation in the University Nursery School and Kindergarten and in local

settlement houses, child care centers, and other schools. A variety of other courses in childhood education, child development, and parent education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels are offered.

**Second Term**—July 28 to August 29, courses in childhood education and child development are offered.

*Bulletins and application blanks are now available from Director of Summer Session,  
813 Administration Building.*

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### ***Now Ready*** **Sixth Book**

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Sample story from WE THREE will be sent free on request.



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## News Notes

(Continued from page 350)

Pretoria, and is financed entirely by it. We hope next year that the school will be eligible for the nursery school grant.

At present the thirty children are housed in a temporary building—an open air shelter built at the back of one of the big morgues, but the school is well equipped and attractively set out. In a year or two the Aga Khan Community intends building a nursery school which will probably be one of the largest and most modern schools in South Africa. It is hoped that this will be a training center for Indian girls specializing in three to six months courses in preparation for "motherhood."

The nursery school is run in connection with a clinic and Red Cross classes and holds tremendous promise if developed along the right lines. The parents are all terribly keen and it has been an inspiring and encouraging period for me.

### China Child Welfare Service

W. Carson Ryan, writing from Shanghai, China, on December 4, says:

Yesterday the "China Child Welfare Service—A Professional Office Serving Children's Agencies" was officially launched. The plan adopted specified the usual functions—clearing house, coordinating center, stimulation of experimentation and research, assistance to professional organizing, and so on. It provided for an executive board of five to seven persons "chosen initially by the USC Child Welfare Committee but ultimately to be selected by professional organizations concerned with child welfare," an advisory board of not fewer than nine members, and a director to administer the service. Nora Hsiung Chu will be the director.

The Service will be supported by grants, donations,

sales of publications, service fees, and other funds from public or private agencies.

### From Australia

Elizabeth Faddis, Principal of the Kindergarten Training College of the Creche and Kindergraten Association at Brisbane writes in a December letter:

We have just graduated twenty-one girls, the largest class ever to receive their diplomas from the College. Twelve of these girls are not free to accept positions with the Creche and Kindergarten Association since they were sent to the College by the State Department of Education and will be used by them in their Infant Schools. We have had many calls for trained nursery school kindergarten teachers from private schools and different organizations throughout Queensland. The interest in preschool education is undoubtedly growing, and at present the demand for trained preschool teachers far exceeds the supply.

We shall have sixteen graduates next year which will help to ease the situation in our own centers and which should help to provide trained teachers for other centers.

The Australian Association for Preschool Child Development is holding the Third Biennial Conference in Adelaide, May 24-30. You will note the theme is "Needs of the Australian Family Today."

Except for the decorations in the store windows and the beautiful red bloom of the poinsettia trees, it doesn't seem at all like the Christmas Season. Everyone leaves the city for the beaches (at least everyone that can get away). I am looking forward to spending part of my "summer vacation" at the beach enjoying the excellent surfing and the glorious sunshine.